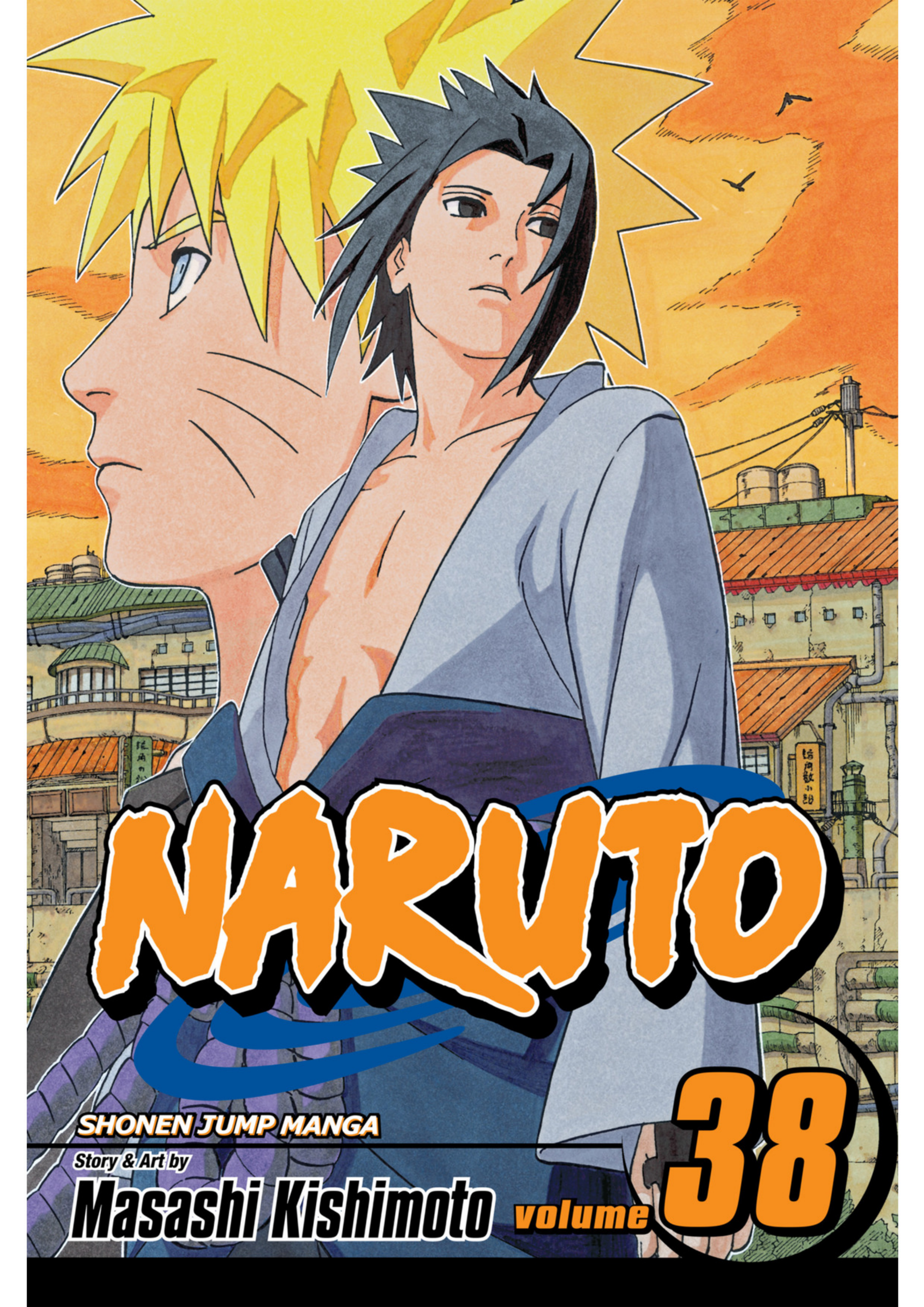
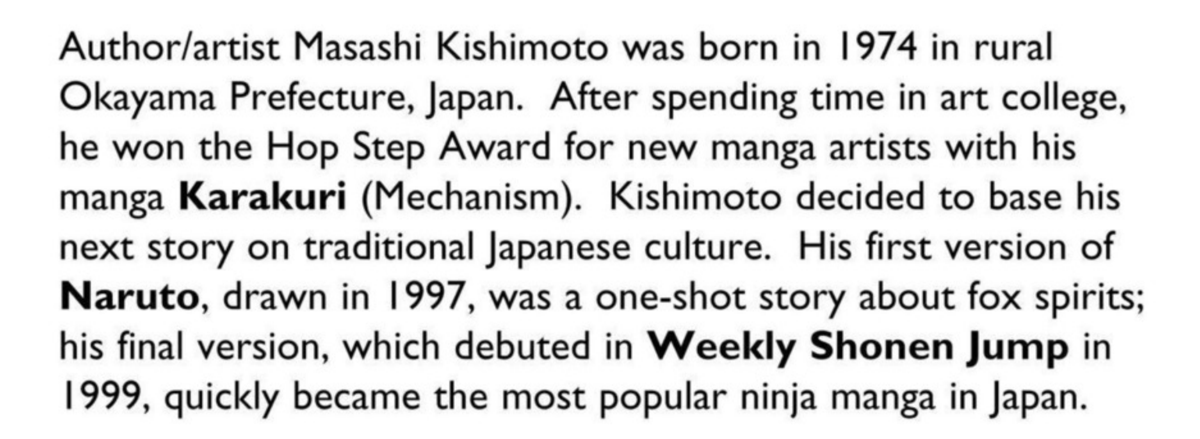

NARUTO
SHONEN JUMP MANGA
Story & Art by
Masashi Kishimoto
volume 38





Many of my friends are getting married lately. It's too bad I'm too busy to attend their weddings... I do so enjoy receptions.

—*Masashi Kishimoto, 2007*



Author/artist Masashi Kishimoto was born in 1974 in rural Okayama Prefecture, Japan. After spending time in art college, he won the Hop Step Award for new manga artists with his manga **Karakuri** (Mechanism). Kishimoto decided to base his next story on traditional Japanese culture. His first version of **Naruto**, drawn in 1997, was a one-shot story about fox spirits; his final version, which debuted in **Weekly Shonen Jump** in 1999, quickly became the most popular ninja manga in Japan.



NARUTO VOL. 38
The SHONEN JUMP Manga Edition

STORY AND ART BY MASASHI KISHIMOTO

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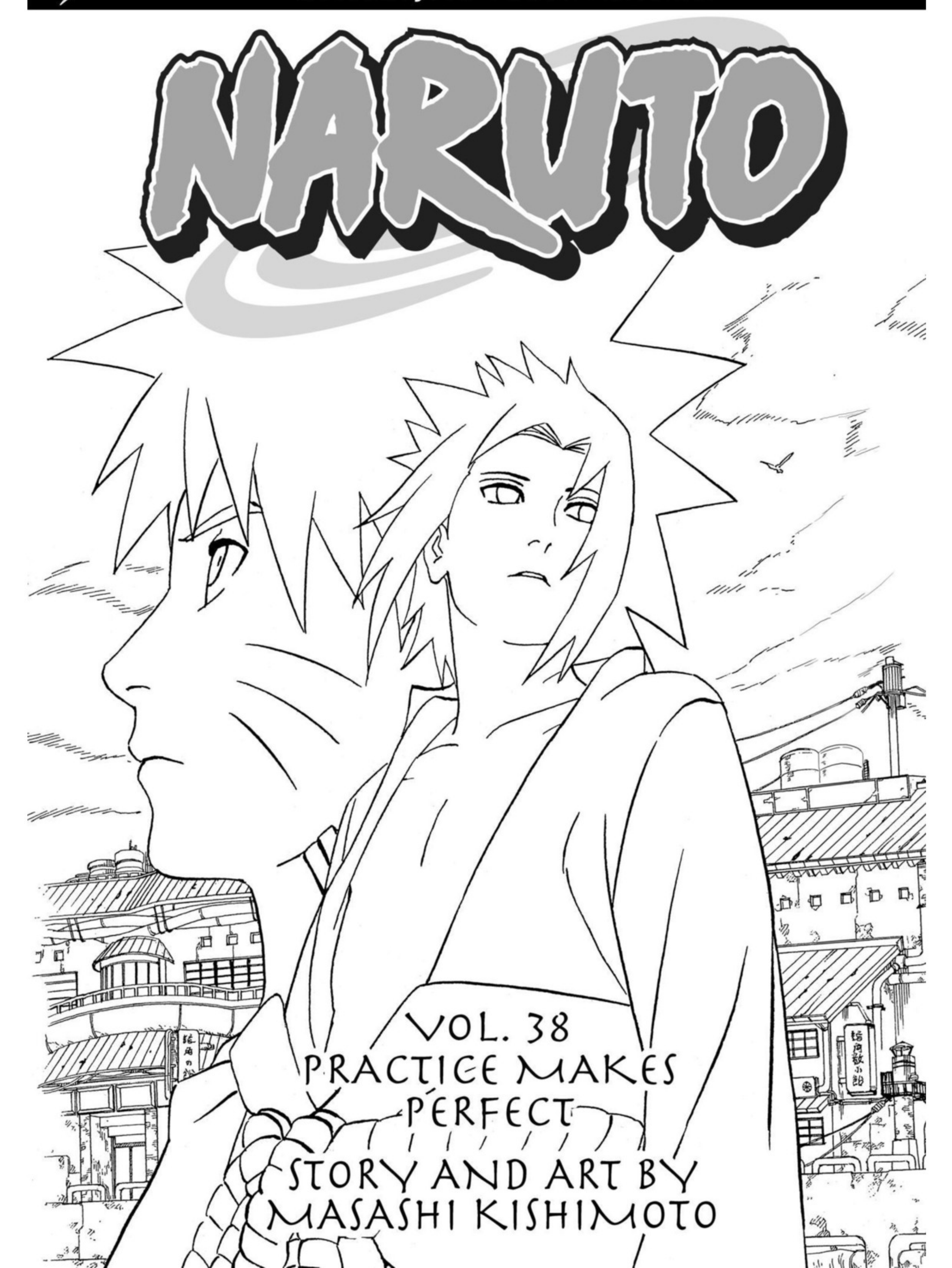


PARENTAL ADVISORY
NARUTO is rated T for Teen and is recommended for ages 13 and up. This volume contains realistic and fantasy violence.

ratings.viz.com



SHONEN JUMP MANGA EDITION















The Story So Far…

Naruto was once the bane of the Konohagakure Ninja Academy. Nevertheless, alongside his friends Sasuke and Sakura, he successfully joins the ranks of the ninja.

During the Chûnin Journeyman Ninja Selection Exam, Orochimaru launches *Operation Destroy Konoha.* Lord Hokage sacrifices his life to halt the attack; in the aftermath, Tsunade steps up to become the Fifth Hokage. Meanwhile, charmed by the power of Orochimaru, Sasuke defeats Naruto and departs Konoha; struggle as he will, Naruto can do nothing to stop him.

More than two years pass. Naruto and his friends undergo rigorous training. Yet when they finally catch up with Sasuke, his power overwhelms them.

Determined to best Sasuke, Naruto returns for another round of intense training. Meanwhile, Shikamaru and the others violently clash with the Akatsuki group. Though the scene looks grim, Naruto arrives just in time to deliver his lethal attack…

CHARACTERS

Sakura
サクラ

Naruto
ナルト

Sasuke
サスケ

Sai サイ

Yamato
ヤマト

Kakashi
カカシ



NARUTO

VOL. 38

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

CONTENTS



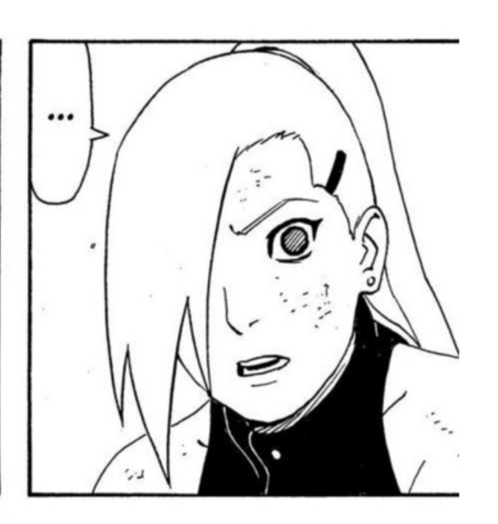
WIND STYLE! RASEN-SHURIKEN!
HERE WE GO!
ZOOOSH

Number 340: The Perilous Bridge

SKF


I'M COMIN' IN!


NO! STEER CLEAR OF NARUTO!
YOU'LL JUST GET CAUGHT UP IN IT!
!


...


SO THIS IS THE POWER OF THE NINE TAILS' JINCHÛRIKI.
THE JUTSU CERTAINLY BEFITS THE BEAST.




ZW
OO
SP
!
AK
SHFF
SH
OOM

SHREE

PFOF

FOFF

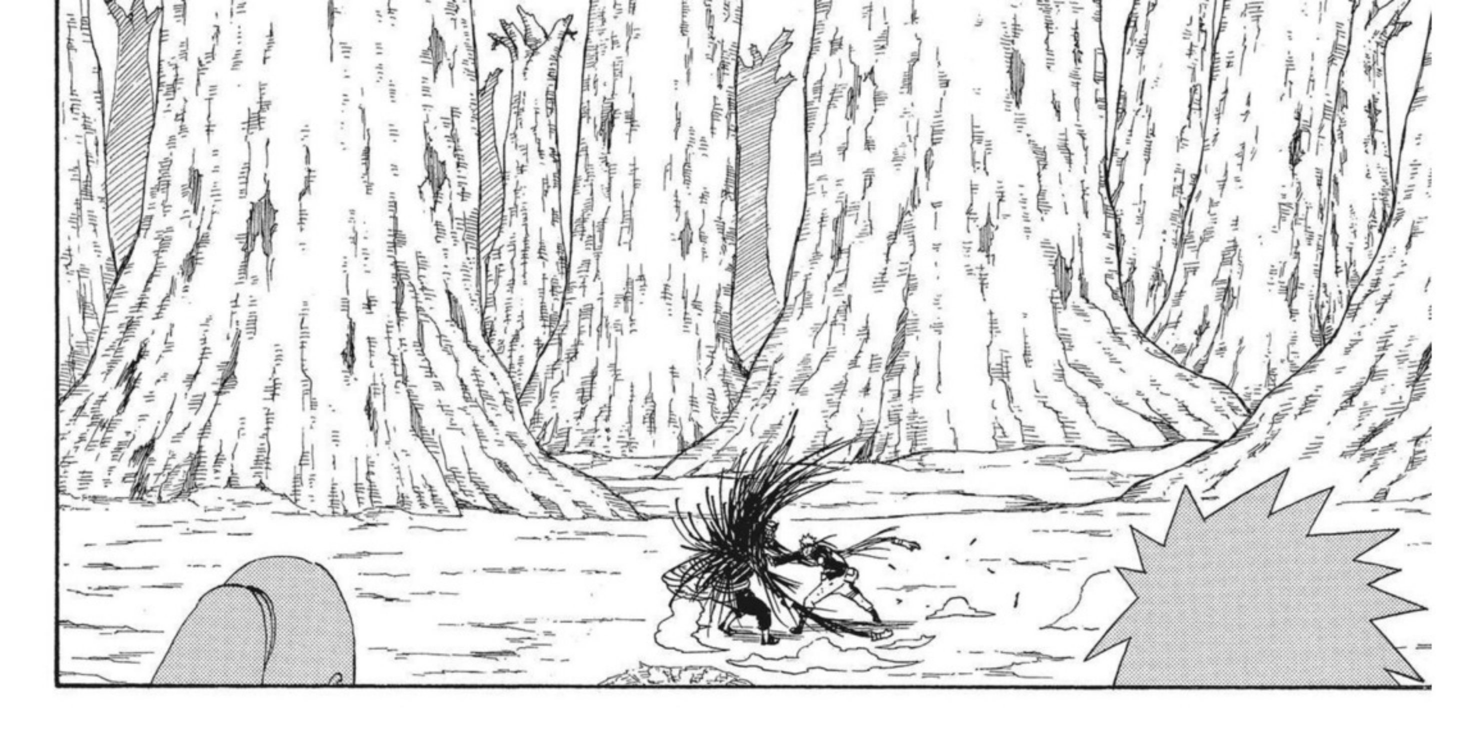
FOOM

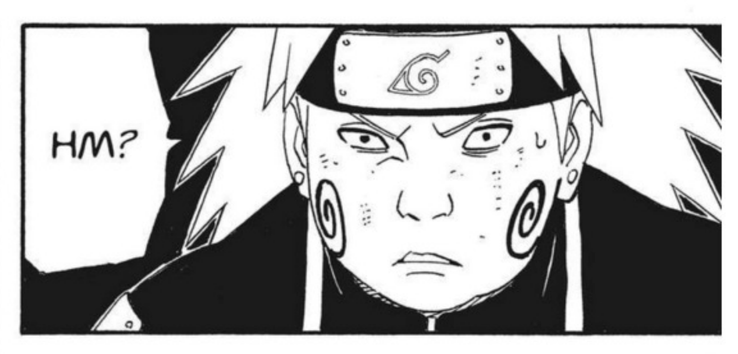



BWUP...
!!
RAAGH!
UNH...

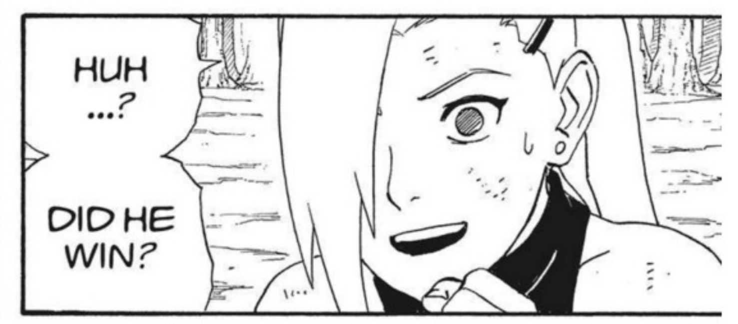


DASH
SPOOF




HM?


...
NO, IT FELL SHORT ...


HUH ...?
DID HE WIN?


ALWAYS A BUNDLE OF SURPRISES, THAT BOY... ALL RIGHT.
YAMATO!
FWOO


RIGHT!

SKRUUNK

YEEG!

YOUR HEART BELONGS TO ME.

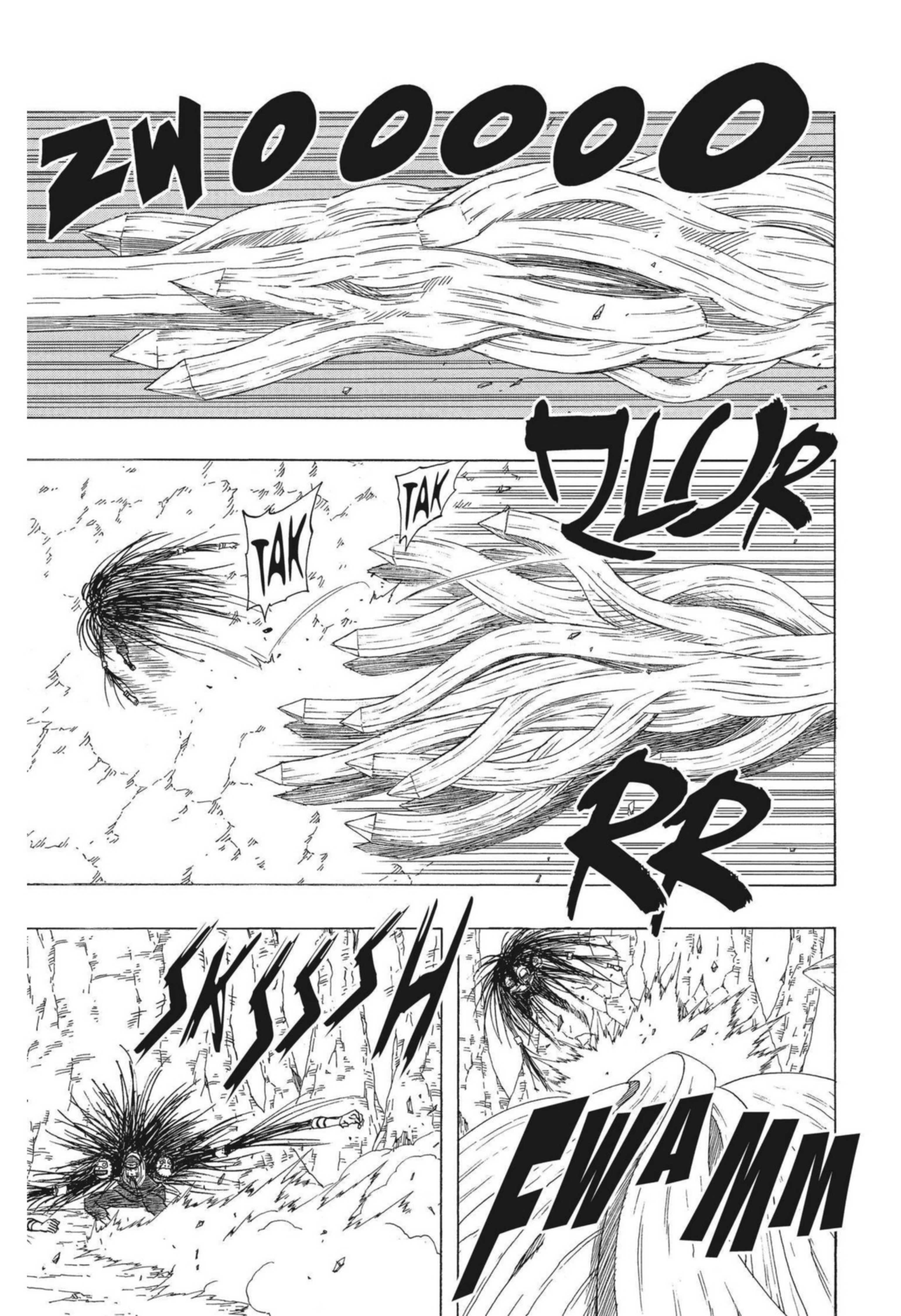
SHRIK

!






CH IT
HYA!!
FWOSH
GWURRR

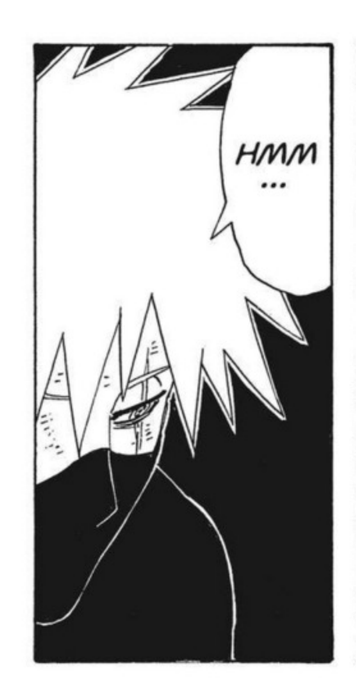

ZWOOOOO
TAK
TAK
RRR
SKSSSH
FWAMM


OH MAN!!
...

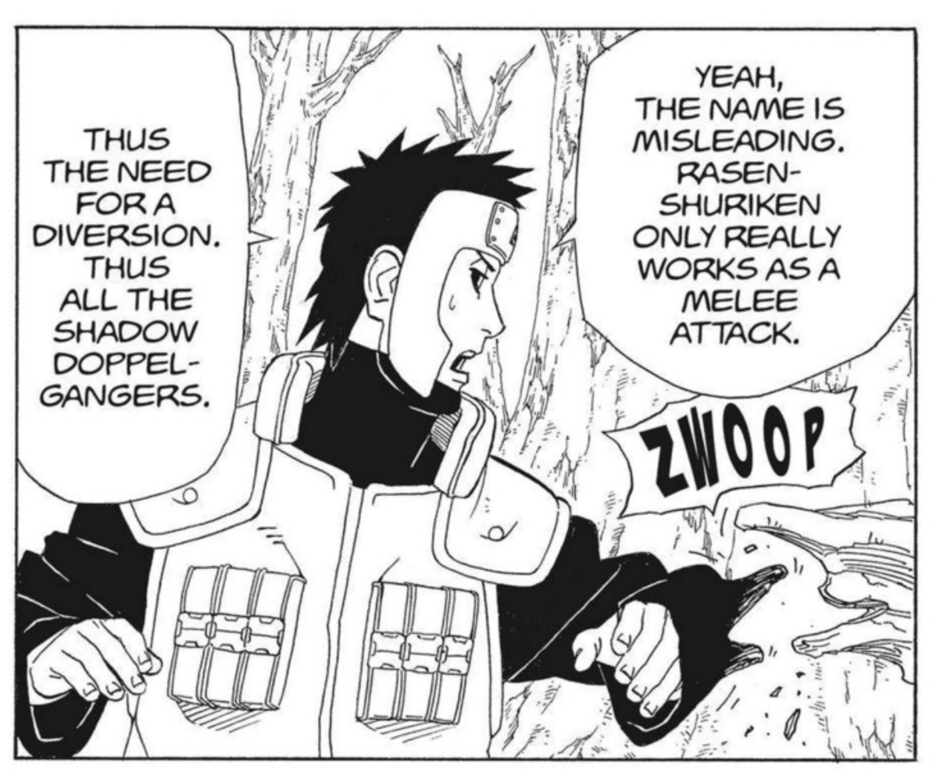

YOU SEEMED DIFFERENT, NARUTO. BUT I GUESS...
YOU'RE STILL THE SAME OLD NARUTO AFTER ALL.


WHEN YOU SAID ***RASEN-SHURIKEN***, I FIGURED YOU'D BOOM-ERANG IT.
DO YOU REALLY NEED TO RUN UP AND SMACK HIM HEAD-ON?


HEY! IT'S AWESOME WHEN IT HITS, OKAY?!

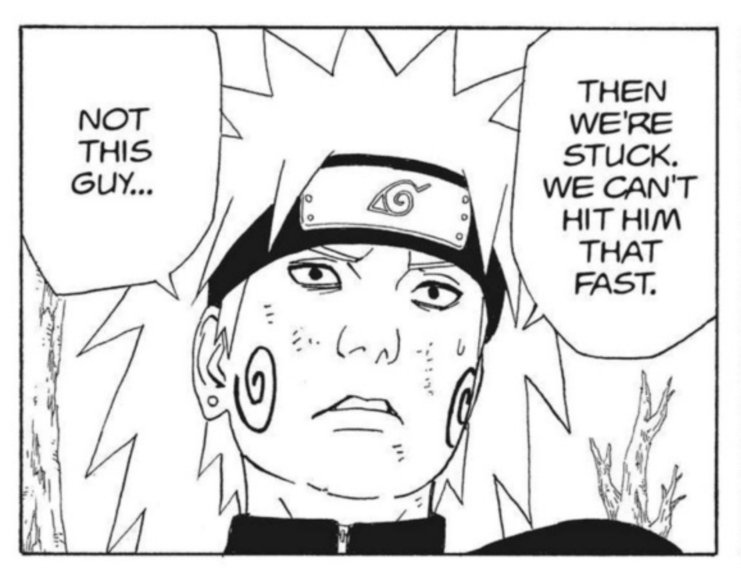

HMM ...


READ THIS WAY


YEAH, THE NAME IS MISLEADING. RASEN-SHURIKEN ONLY REALLY WORKS AS A MELEE ATTACK.
ZWOOP
THUS THE NEED FOR A DIVERSION. THUS ALL THE SHADOW DOPPEL-GANGERS.


...


THIS NEW JUTSU BURNS TOO QUICKLY.
IT LASTS ONLY A FEW SECONDS.


THEN WE'RE STUCK. WE CAN'T HIT HIM THAT FAST.
NOT THIS GUY...

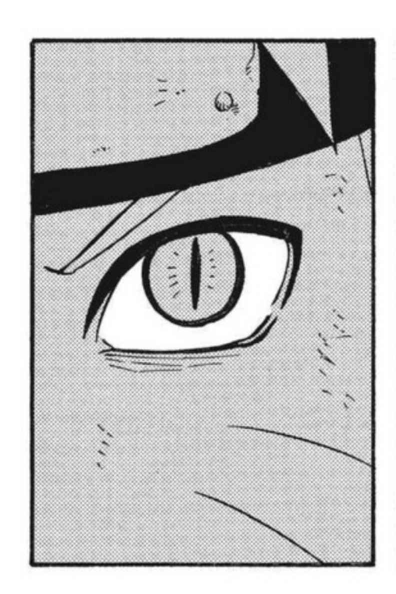

LOOKS LIKE HIS JUTSU IS USELESS... SO LONG AS I KEEP MY DISTANCE.
SO, AVOID CLOSE COMBAT AND KEEP MY EYE ON THE REAL BODY. OKAY, SIMPLE ENOUGH.


SFF

LEMME TRY THIS AGAIN.












READ
THIS
WAY


THAT'S TRUE...
RIGHT NOW, WE'RE FIVE AGAINST ONE.
WE DON'T NEED TO CROSS SHAKY BRIDGES.


HMM... WHAT NOW?


MASTER KAKASHI.
?

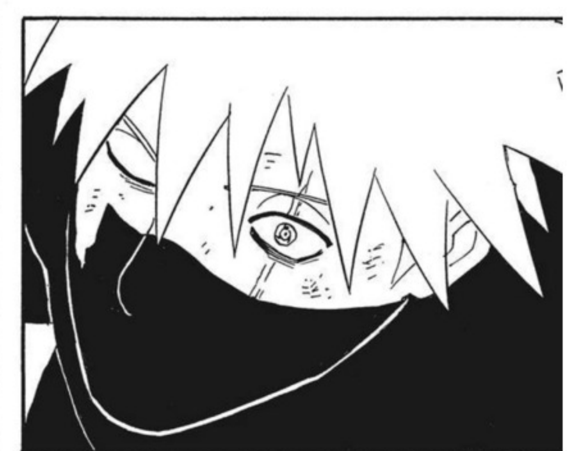

DO YOU REMEM-BER WHAT YOU TOLD ME DURING TRAIN-ING?


?



YOU SAID I'M THE ONLY SHINOBI WHO WILL SURPASS THE FOURTH HOKAGE.

AND YOU MEANT WHAT YOU SAID.













DON'T TAKE AWAY MY CHANCE TO PROVE WHAT I CAN DO!









Number 341: Practice Makes Perfect...!!






READ
THIS
WAY


GO ON, NARUTO.

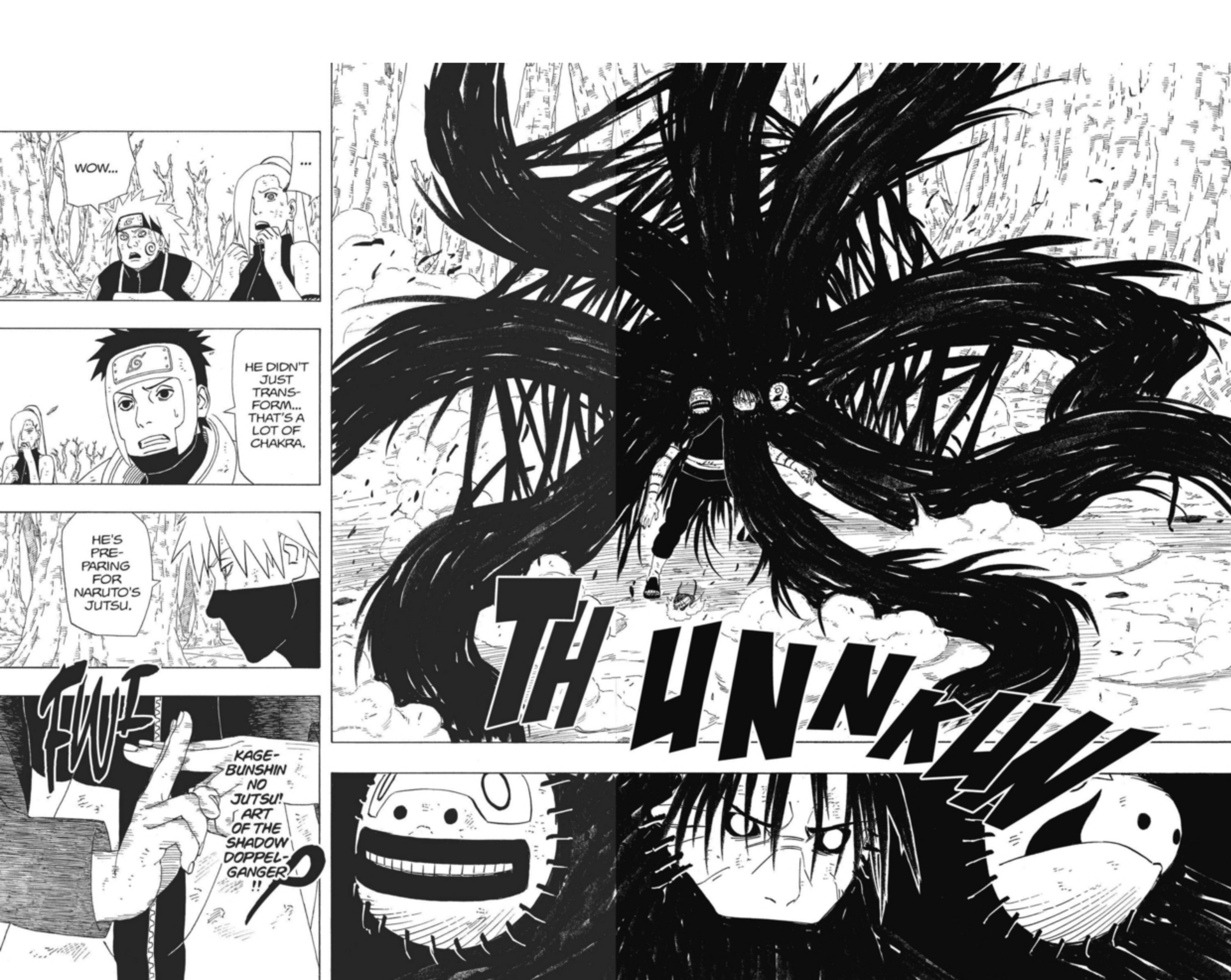

ALL RIGHT!


...
I'D BETTER SHIFT TO A LONG-RANGE STYLE...


SWOOF
URG...


SPLORT

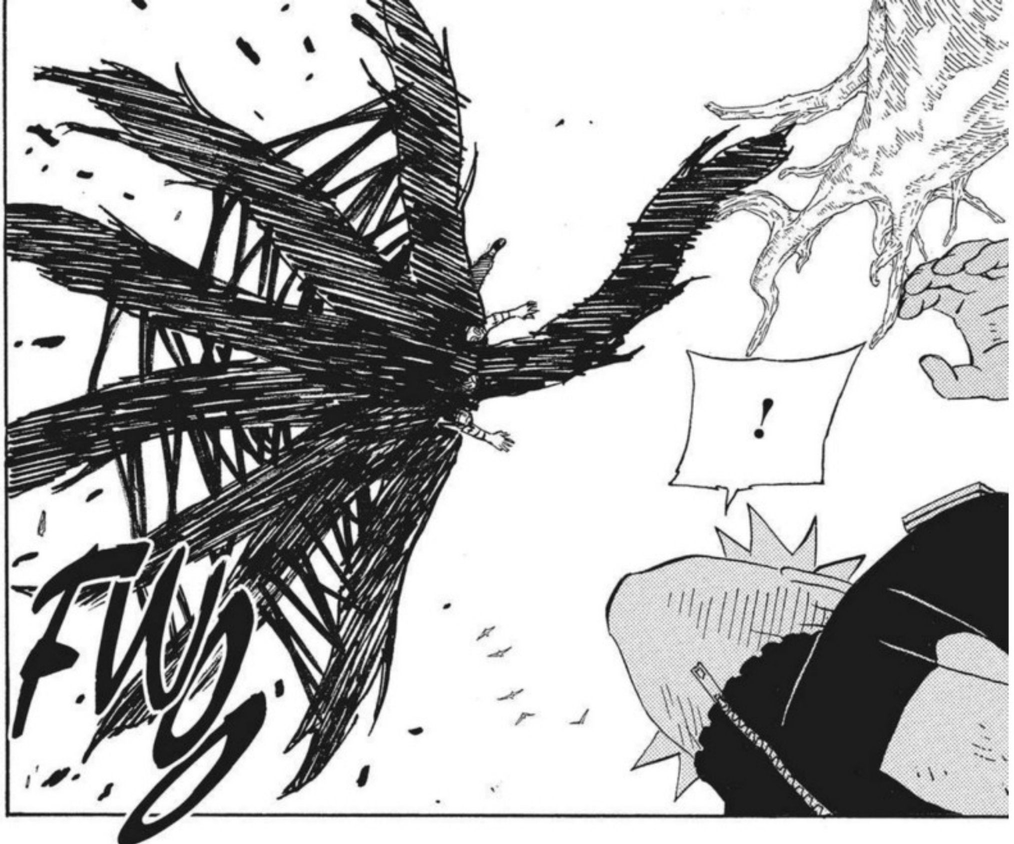

SPLOOOF


WOW...
...
HE DIDN'T JUST TRANSFORM... THAT'S A LOT OF CHAKRA.
HE'S PREPARING FOR NARUTO'S JUTSU.
FWF
KAGE-BUNSHIN NO JUTSU! ART OF THE SHADOW DOPPELGANGER!!
THUNNKUN

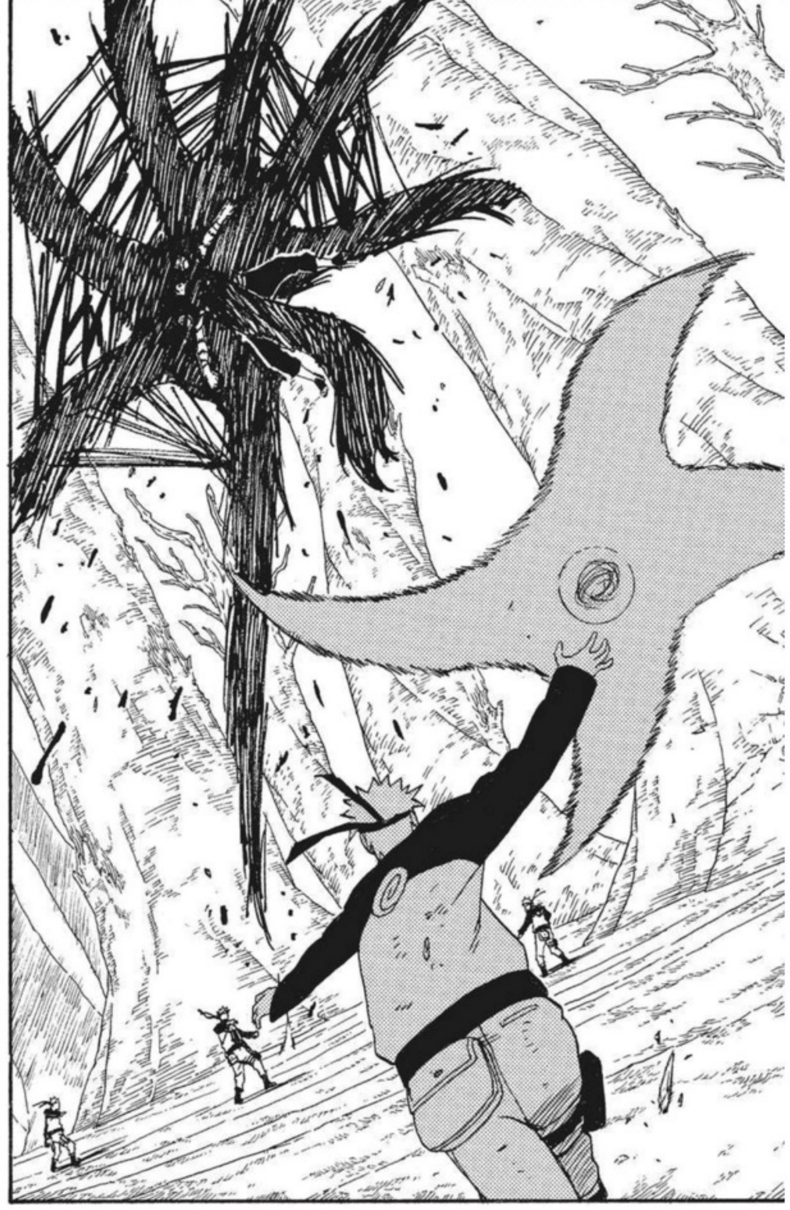

OONG
FSSH
FSSH
HERE WE GO...
TAK



OKAY, NOW!
FOL-
LOW
ME!
TAK
SHK
SH
SH


!
FWOOSH


WHAT A JUMP!




IGNORE THE DOPPEL-GANGERS. THEY'RE JUST A DISTRAC-TION.
AIM FOR THE HEAD, AND THE REST COMES DOWN.
ONCE I DIFFUSE HIS JUTSU, I'M HOME FREE.

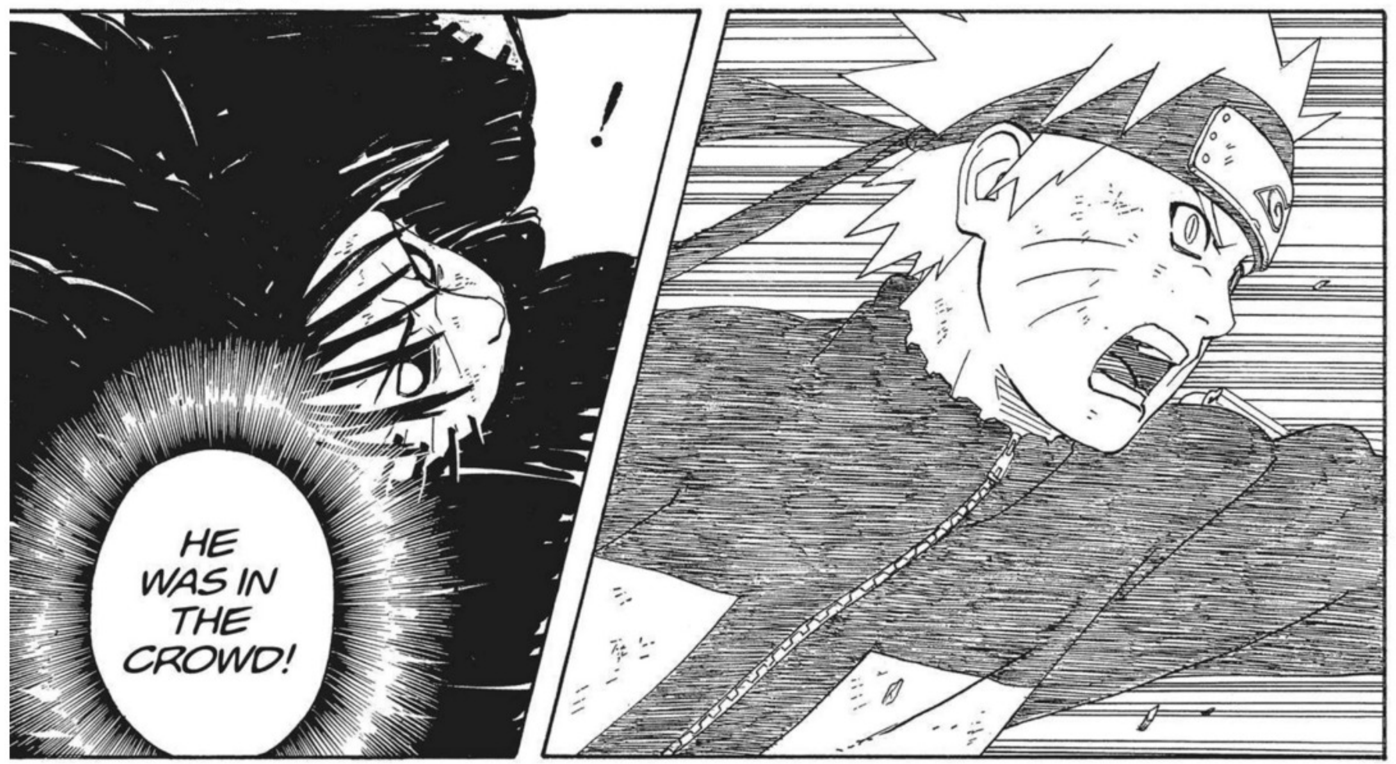


HE'S READY, JUST LIKE I SAID!
ZWOOOM
KOOM


POFF


WHAT?
JUST A DOPPEL-GANGER?


READ THIS WAY


!
HE WAS IN THE CROWD!





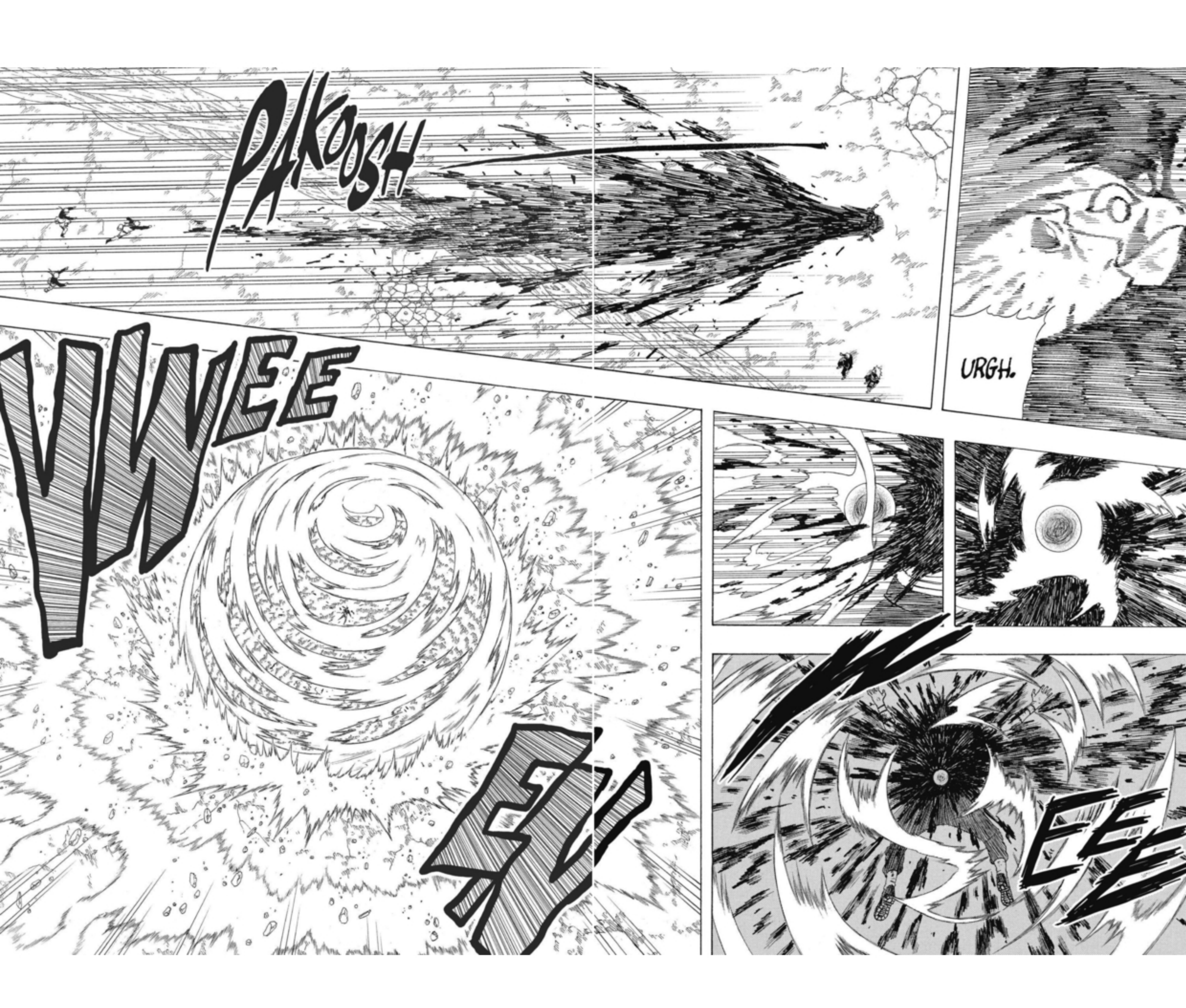





GOTCHA!



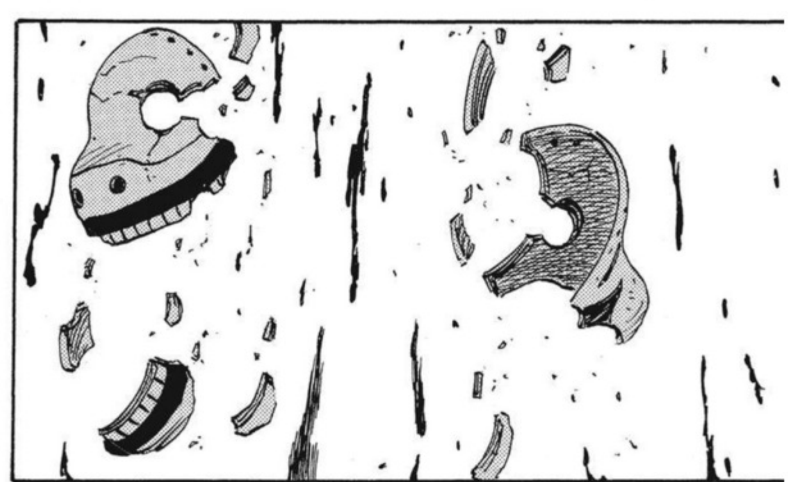

KOOOM

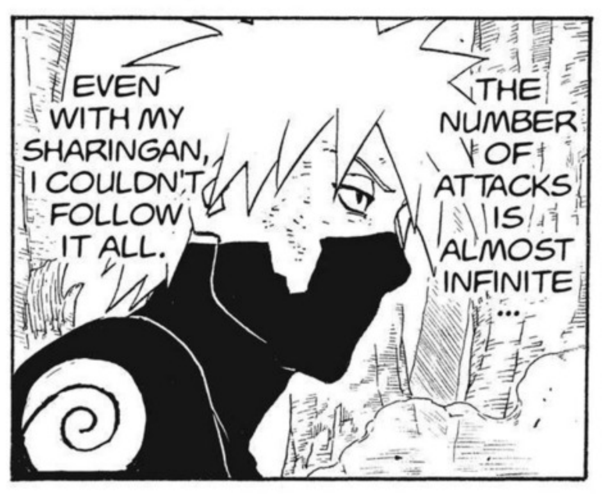

URGH.
PAKOOSH
VWEE

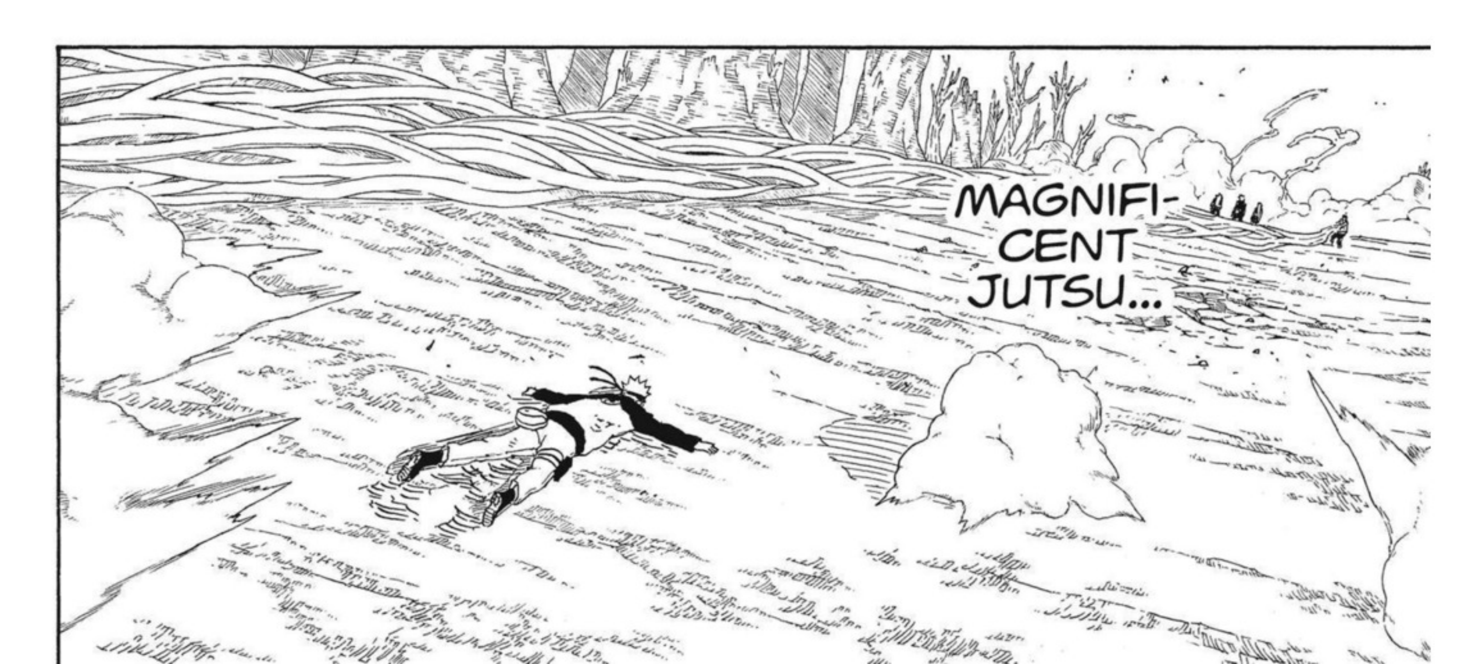

RUMMMMMBLE
GRR
ACK!
GWURM
FWAP

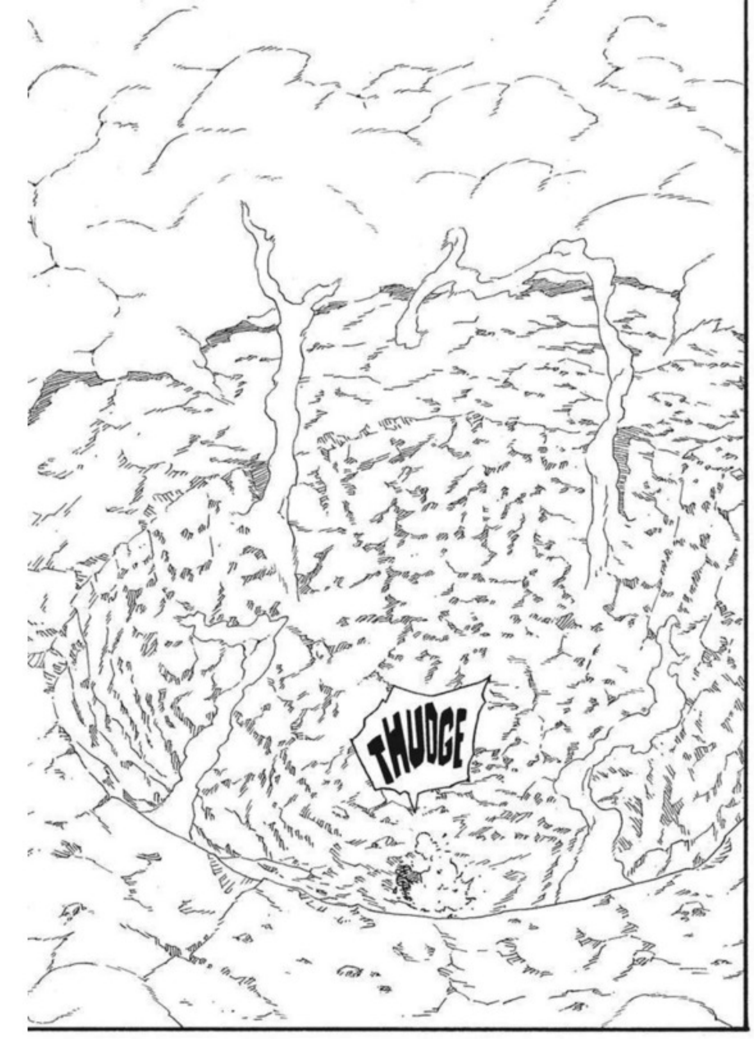

READ THIS WAY
GWURSHH
NGAAAH!!

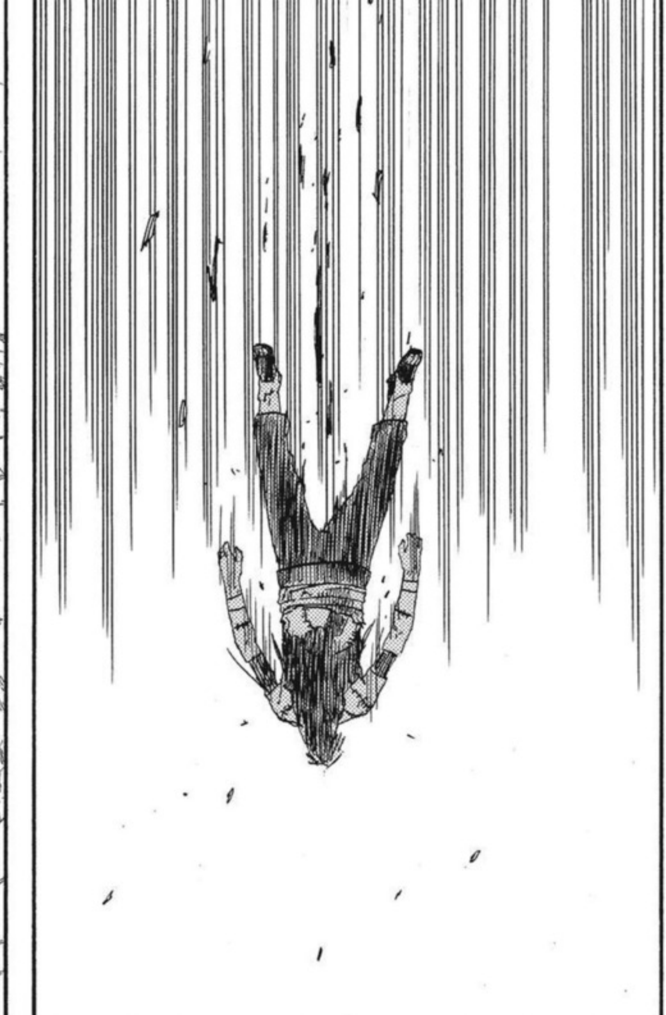
KRIK
KAK

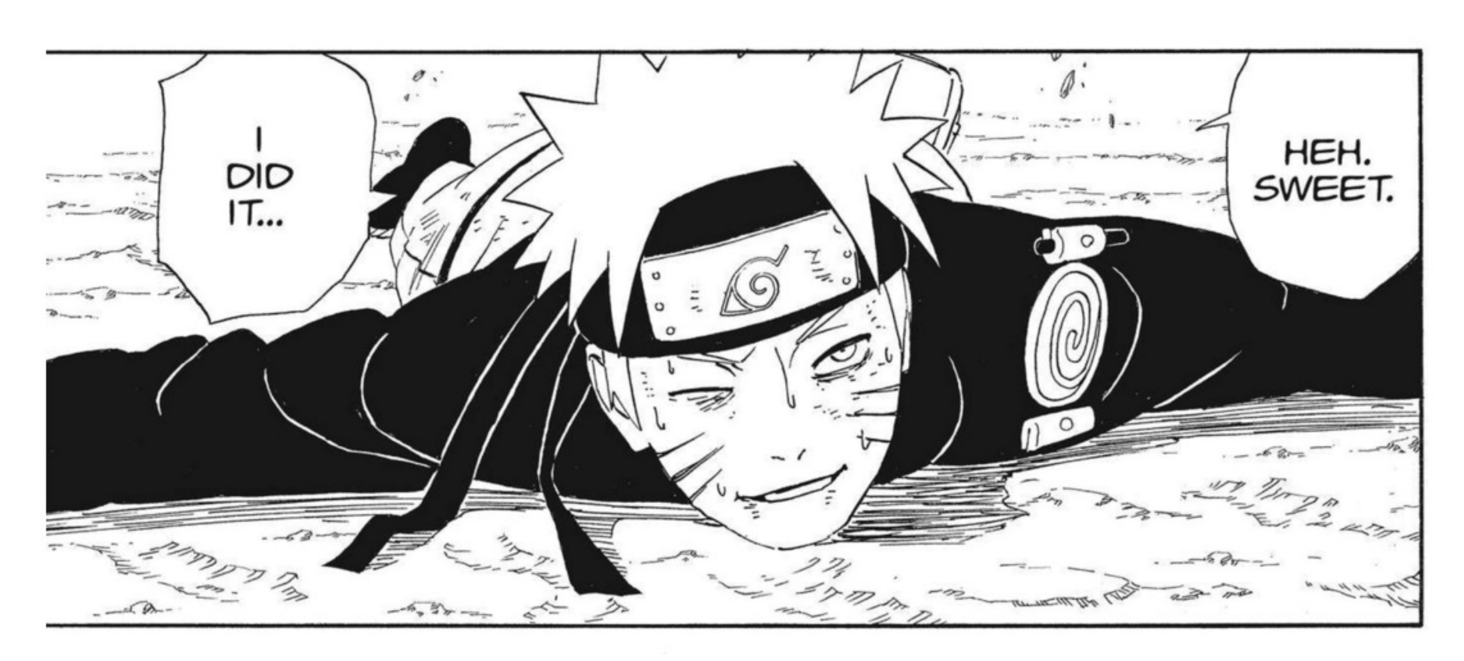



THE NUMBER OF ATTACKS IS ALMOST INFINITE...
EVEN WITH MY SHARINGAN, I COULDN'T FOLLOW IT ALL.


MAGNIFI-CENT JUTSU...


THUDGE




HEH. SWEET.
I DID IT...



MEET KISHIMOTO MASASHI'S ASSISTANTS

○PART 10 ASSISTANT NO. 10: SATÔ ATSUHIRO

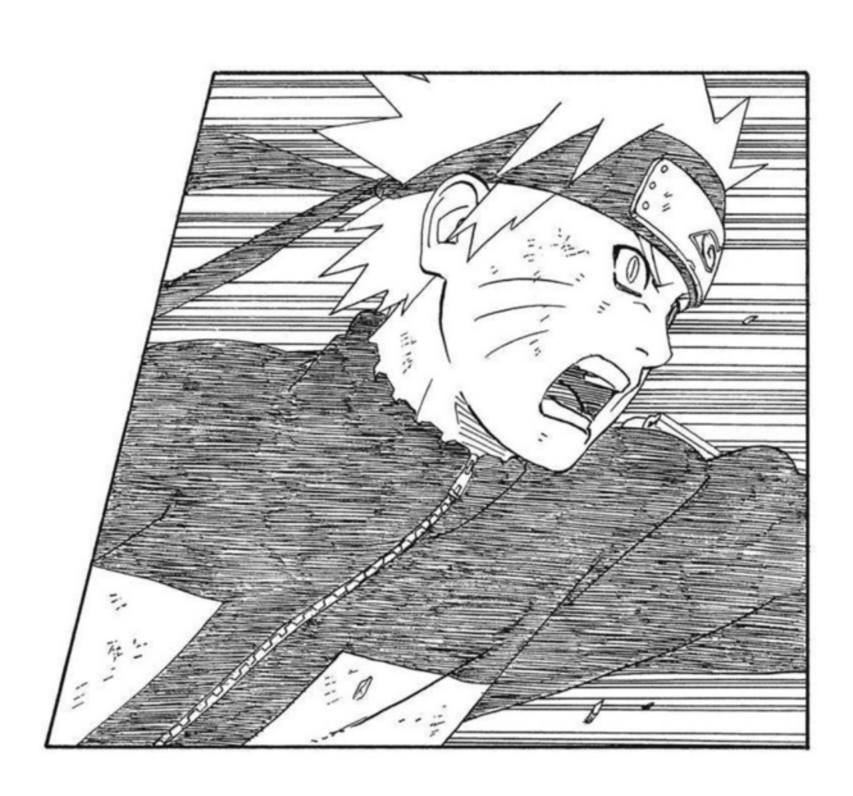
[PROFILE]

- A VETERAN OF ULTRA HIGH-PROFILE PROJECTS LIKE *ROOKIES* AND *DEATH NOTE*.
- ONE OF THE FIRST FIFTY PEOPLE EVER TO FINISH HUDSON'S *BOMBERMAN*, AND HAS THE CERTIFICATE TO PROVE IT!
- LOVES VIDEO GAMES AND KNOWS A BUNCH ABOUT THEM. AN EXPERT AT *STREET FIGHTER II*
- ZANGIEF – GIVE HIM AN OPENING AND HE'LL WHIRL YOU AROUND AND BEAT YOU IN AN INSTANT.
- BLANKA – GIVE HIM AN OPENING AND HE'LL ZOOM AT YOU LIKE A CORKSCREW AND KNOCK YOU OUT.
- WOLF – SHOW HIM A WEAKNESS AND HE'LL SPIN YOU AND SLAM YOU DOWN. BUT... WELL, HE'S STILL NEW AT *VIRTUA FIGHTER*.
- INCREDIBLY SKILLED AT ASSEMBLING PLASTIC MODELS (I.E., GUNDAM). HE'S JUST A DEXTEROUS GUY IN GENERAL!



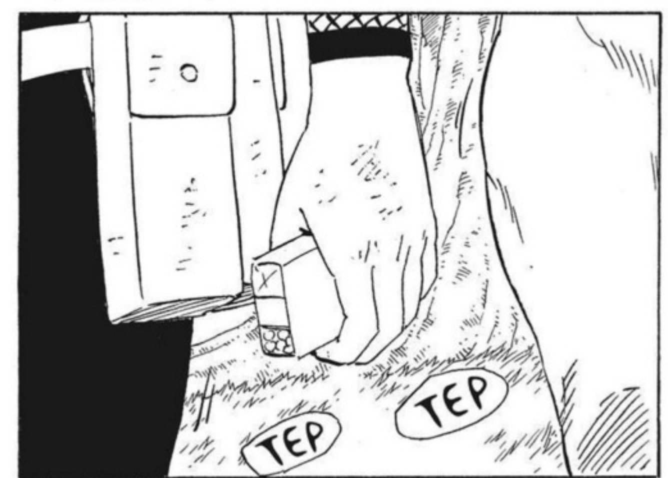
Number 342: The Black King...!






READ
THIS
WAY


SHK


TEP
TEP


!
TAK
FOUND YOU!


REIN-FORCE-MENTS?
WELL, YOU'RE A BIT LATE.

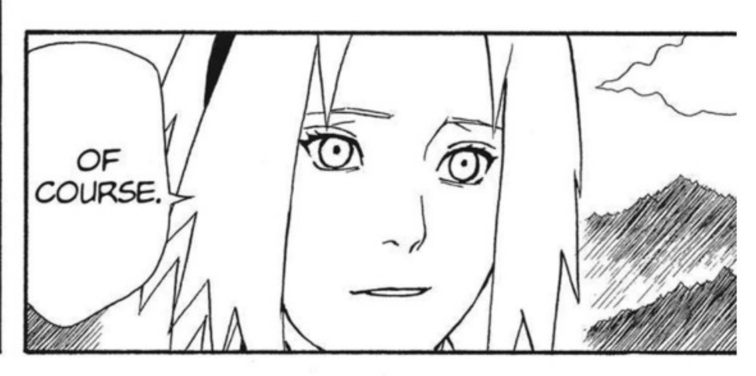

WHAT?! SHIKA-MARU...
YOU DIDN'T TAKE DOWN AN AKATSUKI ON YOUR OWN, DID YOU?
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE THAT GOOD.

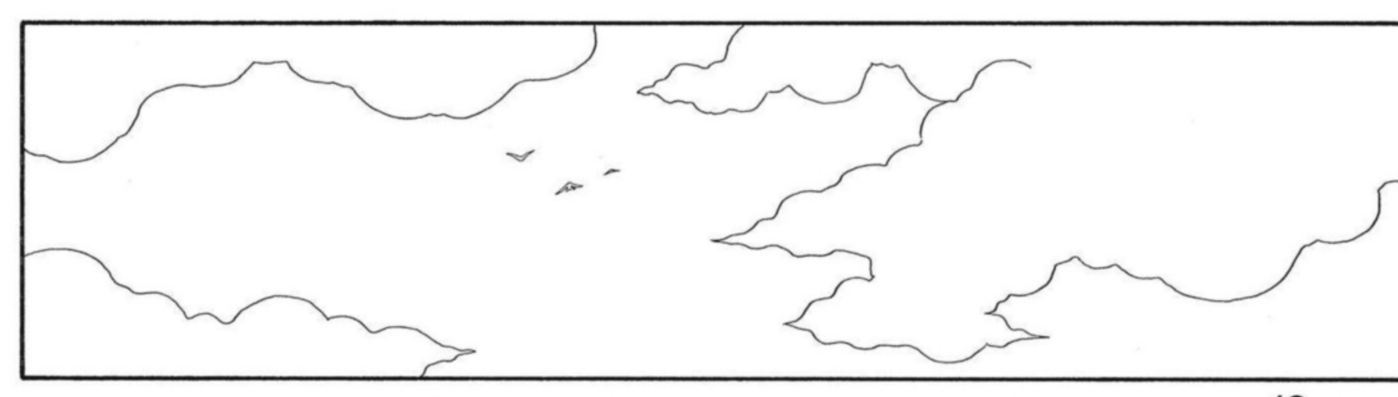

SST

I HAD TO. THIS TIME, I...I KNEW I JUST HAD TO.

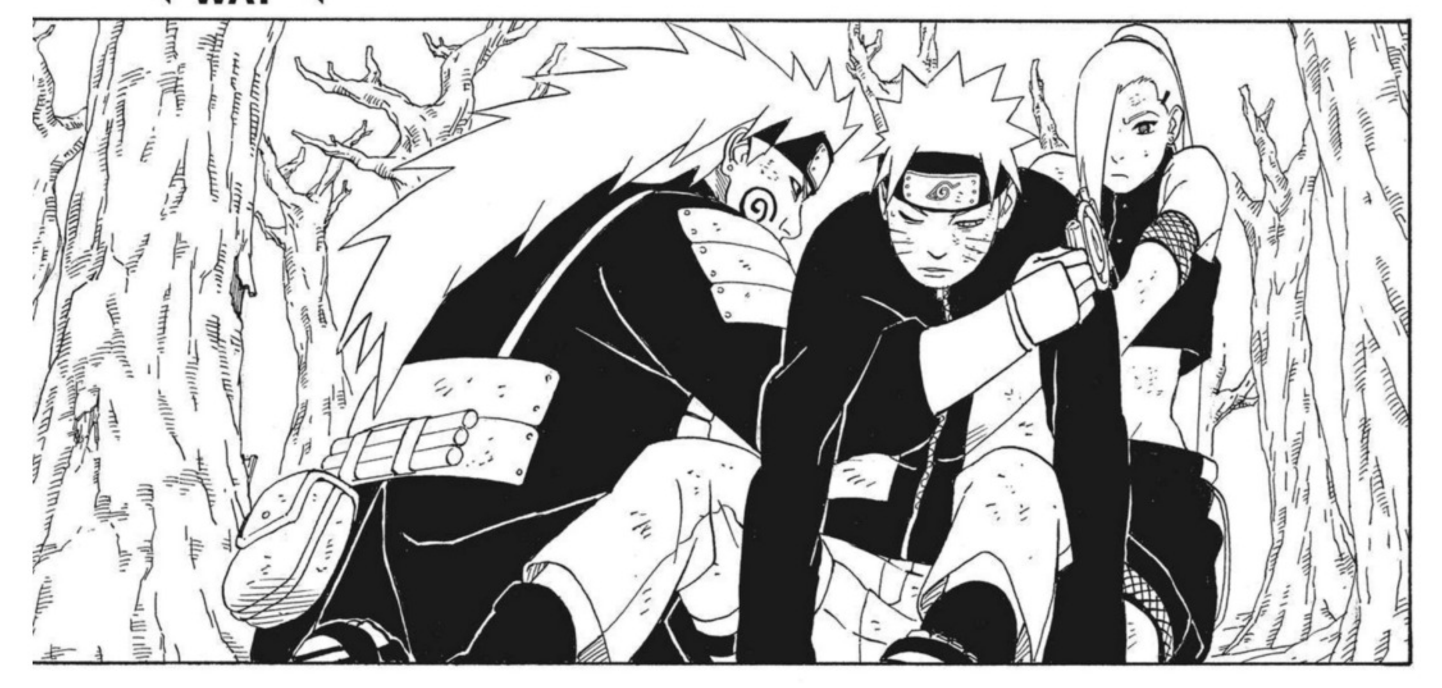


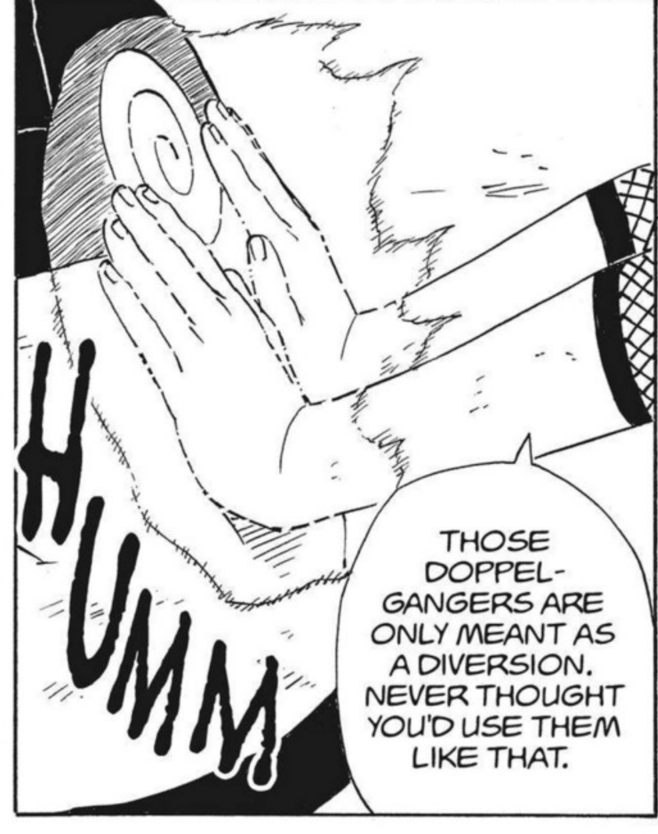


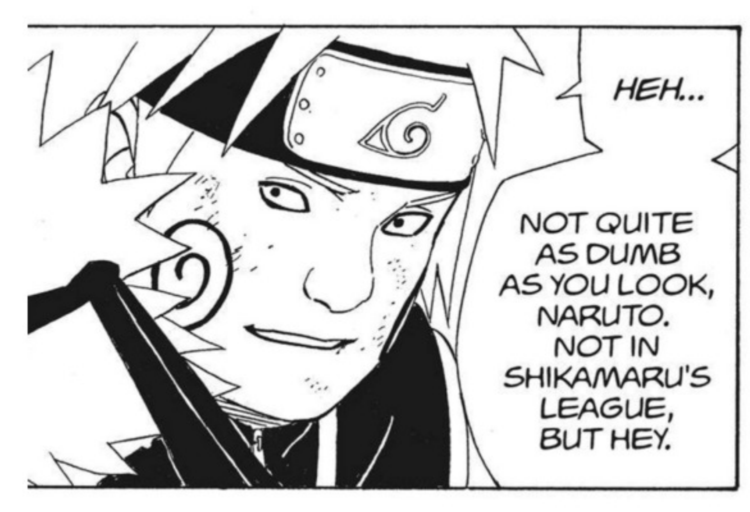





READ THIS WAY



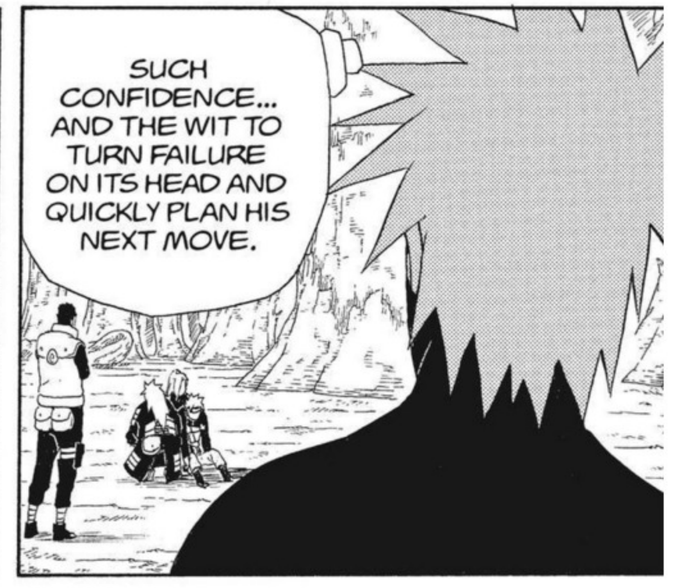

HUMM
THOSE DOPPEL-GANGERS ARE ONLY MEANT AS A DIVERSION. NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D USE THEM LIKE THAT.

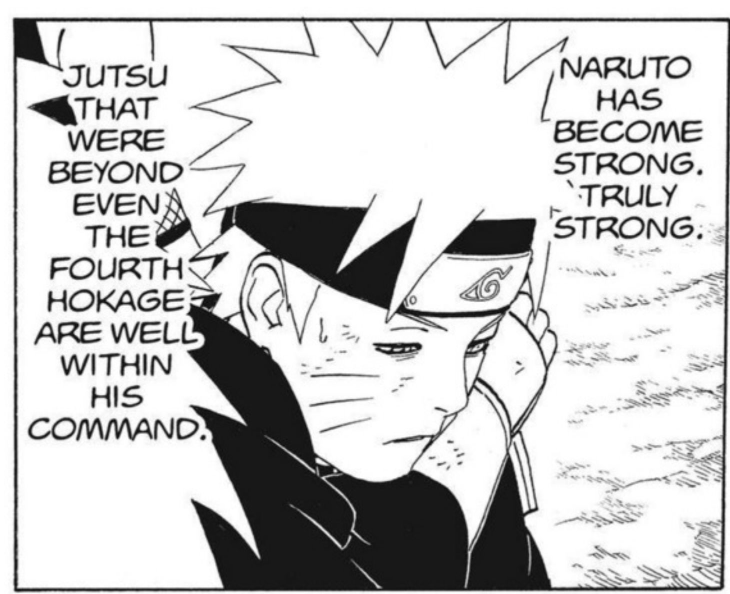

HEH...
NOT QUITE AS DUMB AS YOU LOOK, NARUTO. NOT IN SHIKAMARU'S LEAGUE, BUT HEY.


PLEASE DON'T COMPARE ME TO SHIKA-MARU...


I'M IMPRESSED. YOU PULLED OFF THAT JUTSU THREE TIMES IN A ROW.
YOU COULD ONLY DO IT TWICE DURING TRAINING.


...


SUCH CONFIDENCE... AND THE WIT TO TURN FAILURE ON ITS HEAD AND QUICKLY PLAN HIS NEXT MOVE.

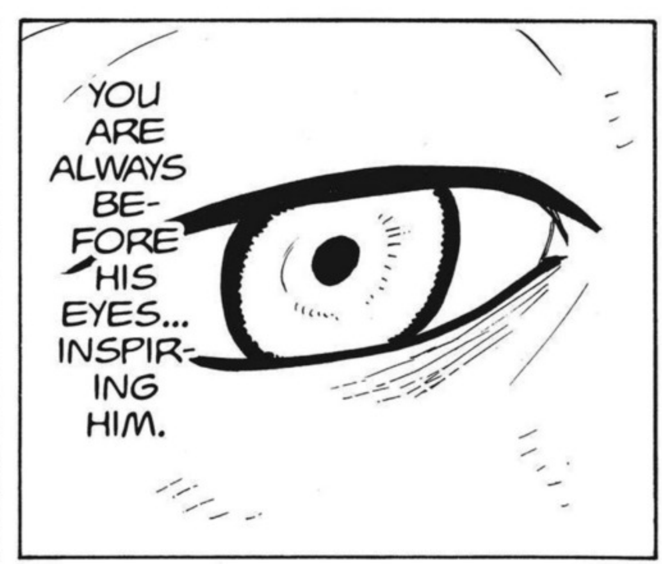

NARUTO HAS BECOME STRONG. TRULY STRONG.
JUTSU THAT WERE BEYOND EVEN THE FOURTH HOKAGE ARE WELL WITHIN HIS COMMAND.


I GUESS IT'S TIME TO PASS THE TORCH...
HE HAS SUR-PASSED ME.


...
CAN YOU SENSE IT?




READ THIS WAY

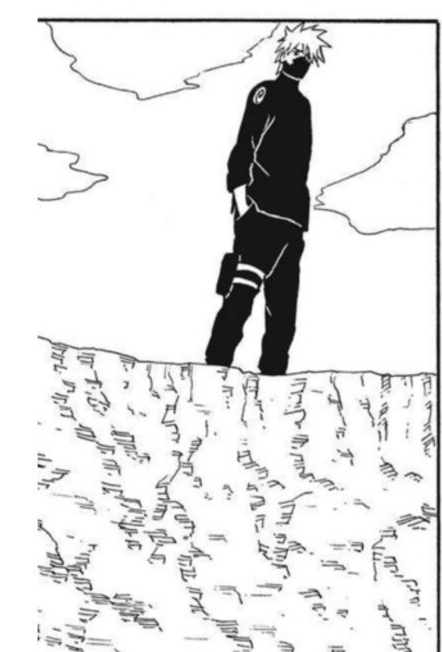

YOU ARE ALWAYS BE-FORE HIS EYES... INSPIR-ING HIM.


YOU MAKE HIM STRONG. YOU DO KNOW THAT...


DON'T YOU, SASUKE?



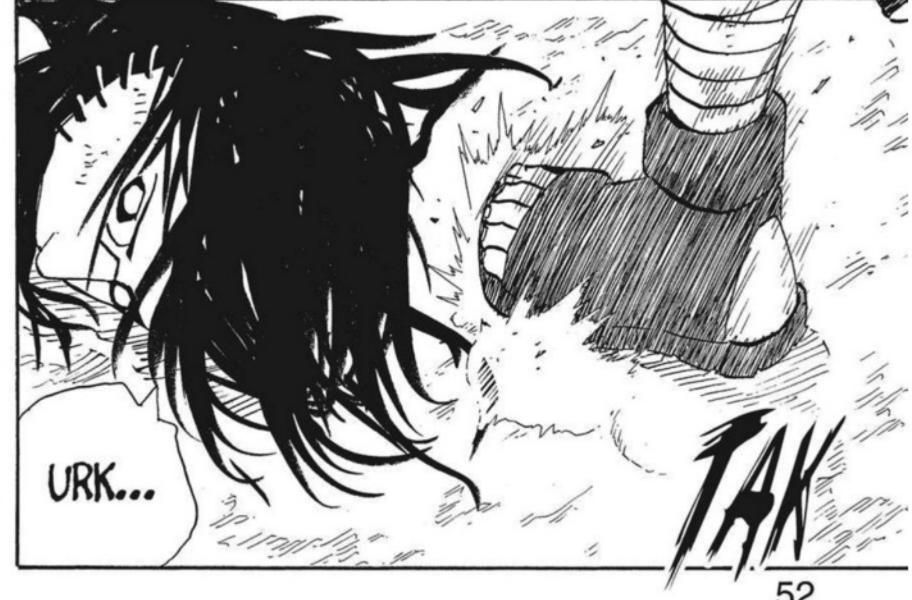

MASTER KAKASHI! TIME TO MOVE?
YEAH.

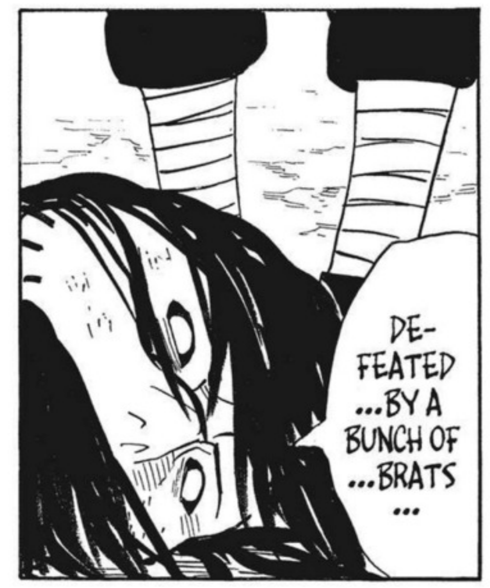




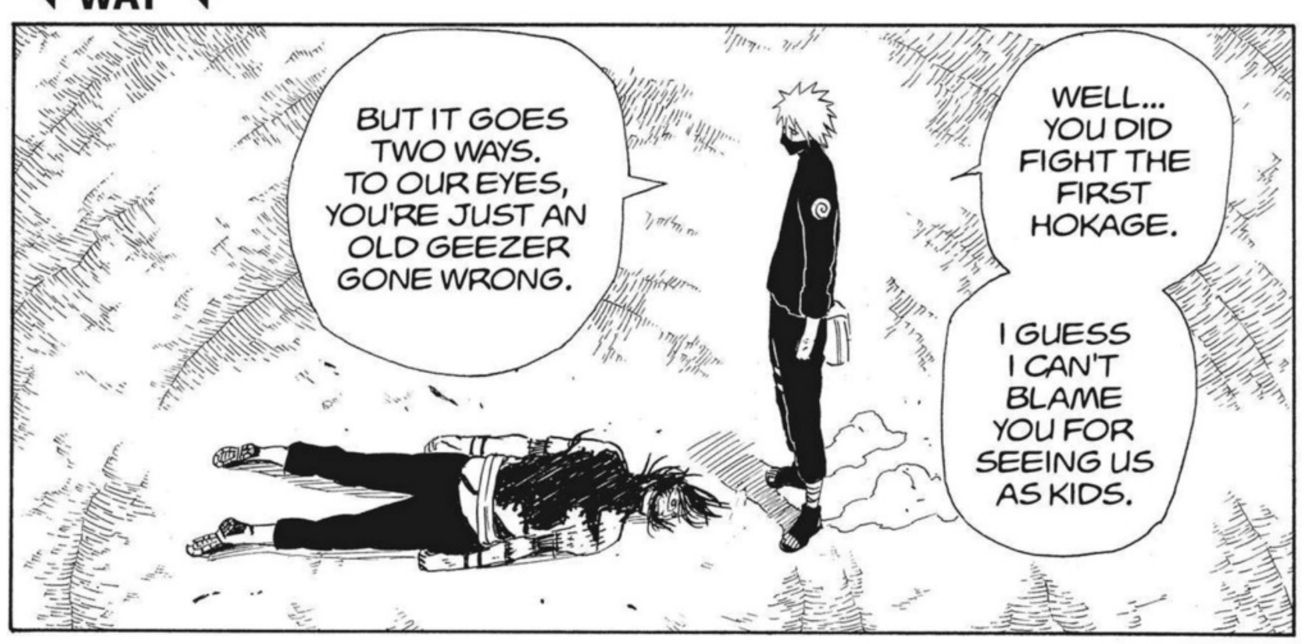

OKAY, PEOPLE. WE'RE MOVING BACK TO KONOHA.
SHF


WHAT ABOUT MASTER KAKASHI?
HE'S CLEANING UP.


TAK
URK...


DE-FEATED ...BY A BUNCH OF ...BRATS ...



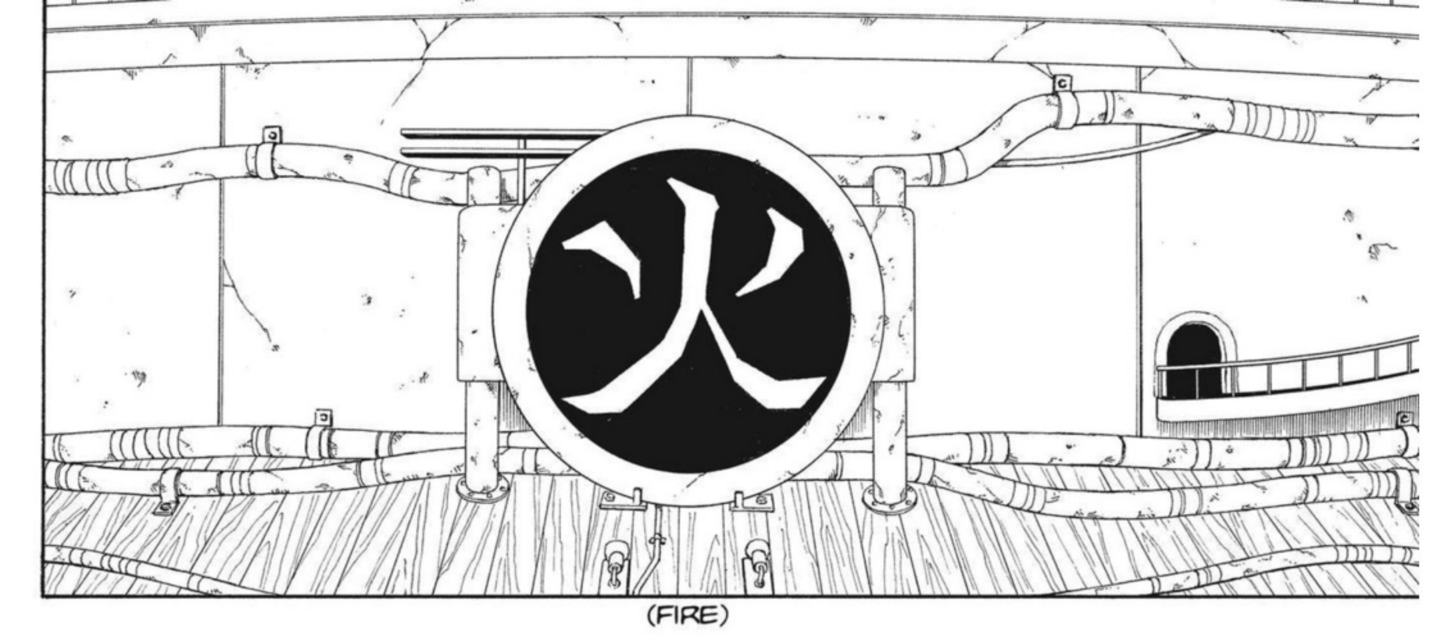


AND HERE YOU ARE DYING, HUGGING THE EARTH LIKE A WORM.

BZZZAK

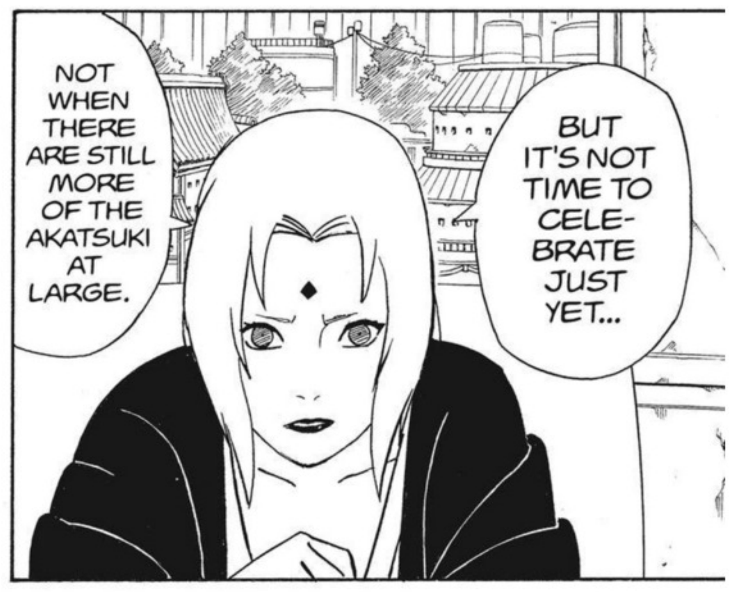
ONE BY ONE...

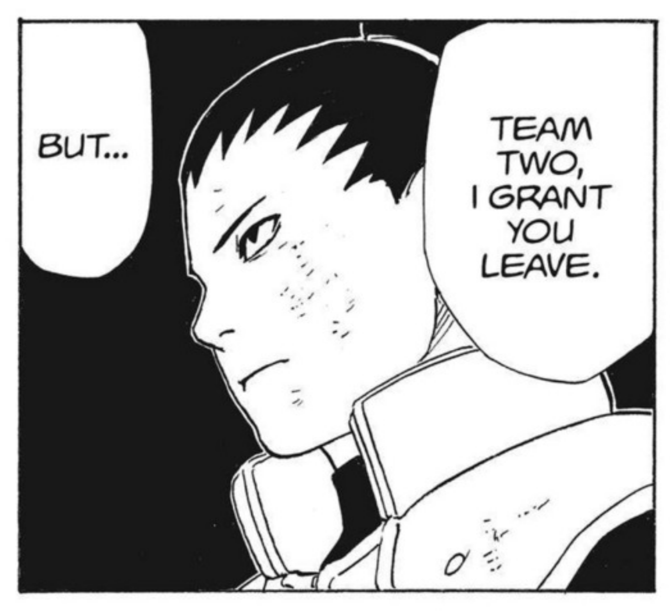
THE NEW GENERATION WILL CATCH UP TO YOU. AND THEY WILL ALL SURPASS YOU IN THE END.

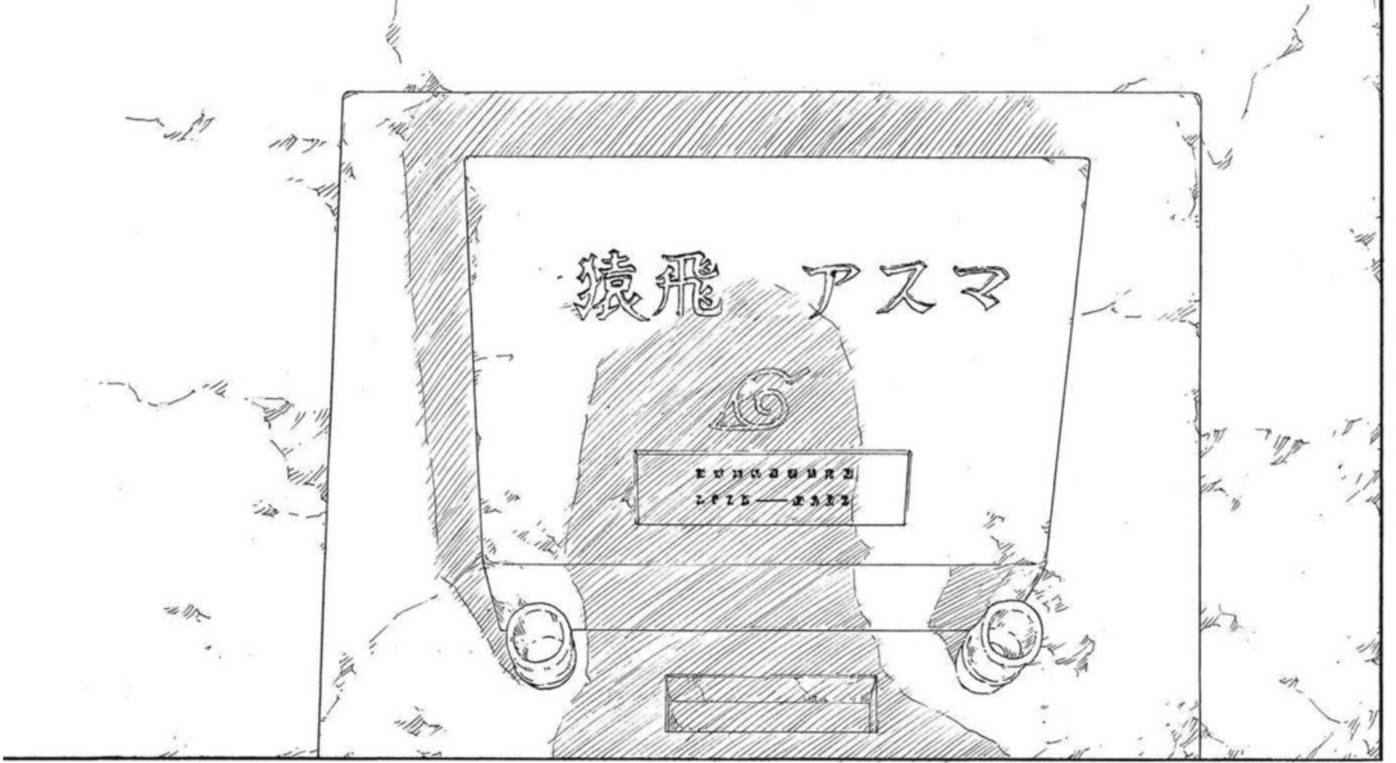


(FIRE)

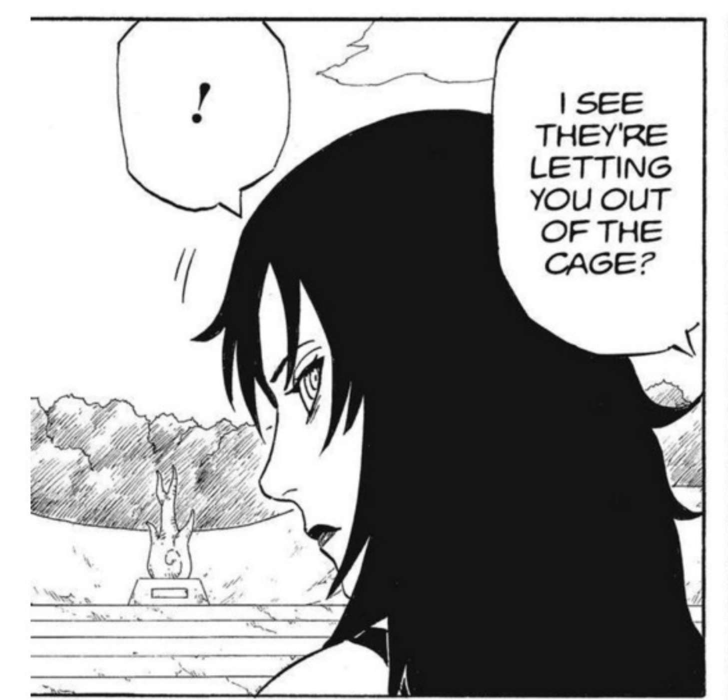

WELL DONE, PEOPLE.


BUT IT'S NOT TIME TO CELE-BRATE JUST YET...
NOT WHEN THERE ARE STILL MORE OF THE AKATSUKI AT LARGE.

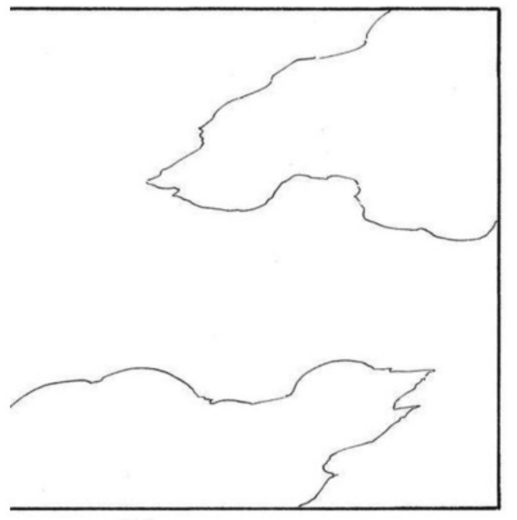

TEAM TWO, I GRANT YOU LEAVE.
BUT...

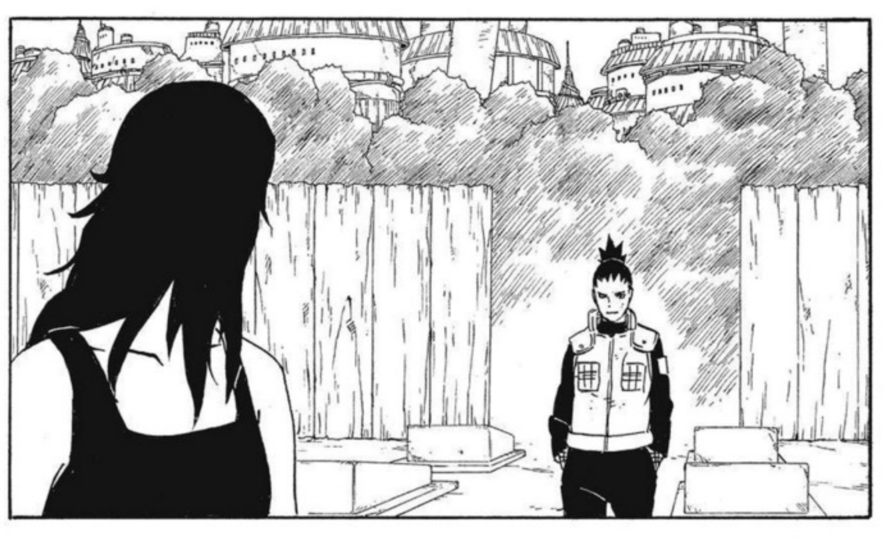


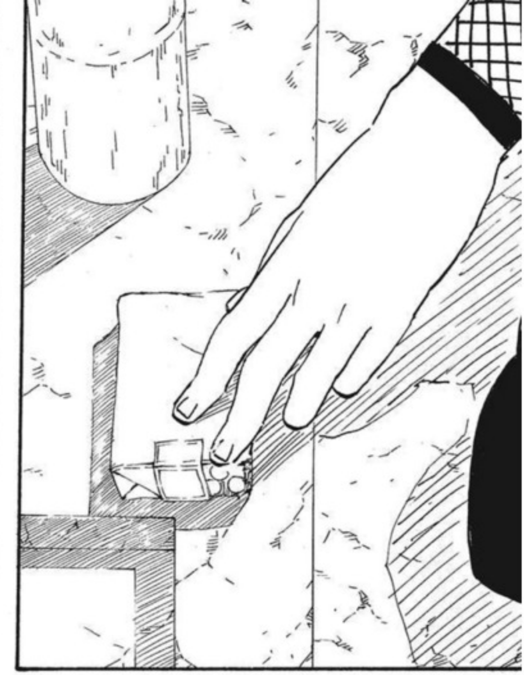
(SARUTOBI ASUMA)







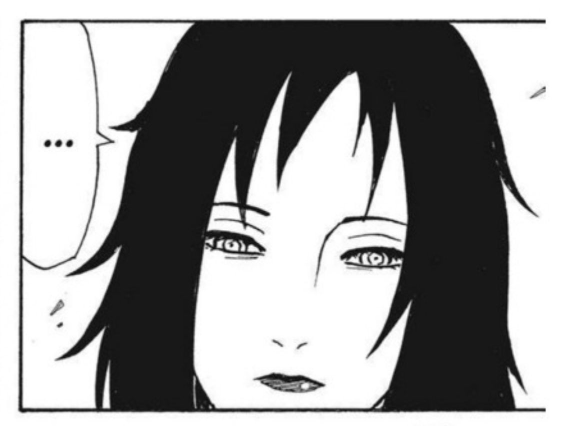





YOU LOST YOUR SHOGI MATE...
YOU WERE ASUMA'S FAVORITE.
YOU MUST MISS HIM TOO...


HE TAUGHT ME A BUNCH OF THINGS... SOME MORE IMPORTANT THAN OTHERS.
SHOGI WAS ONE OF THEM.


IF I SAID I DIDN'T MISS HIM, I'D BE LYING.
BUT I'M NOT A KID ANYMORE, AND I'M EXPECTED TO ACT MY AGE.
I CAN'T DO THE SELF-PITY THING.


...

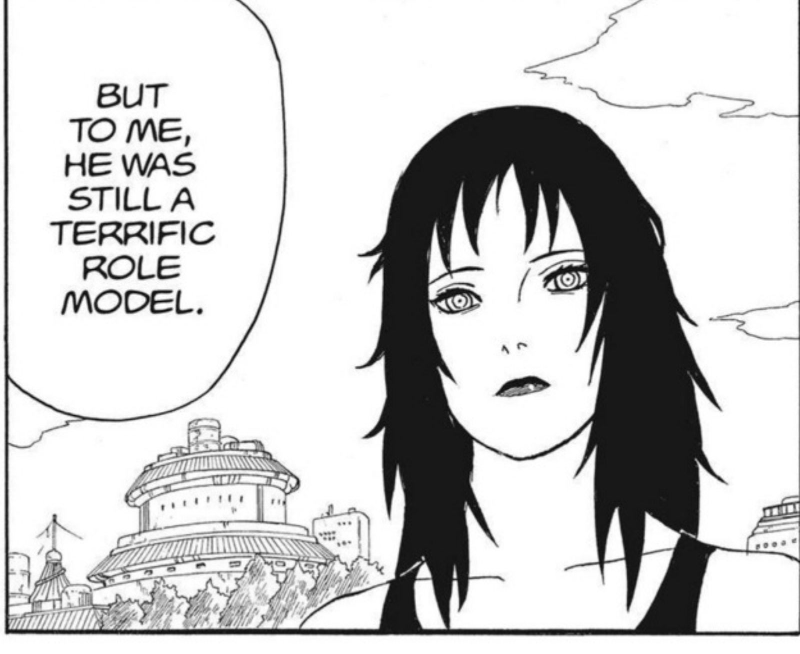

...

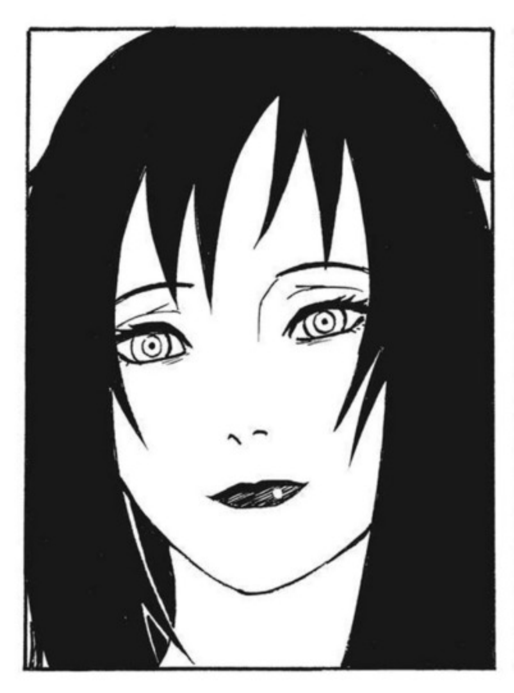



READ THIS WAY


I... I USED TO COMPLAIN ABOUT EVERYTHING. EVERYTHING ANNOYED ME BACK THEN.
I MADE SO MANY MISTAKES BECAUSE OF IT.
AND EVERY TIME, ASUMA CAME TO MY RESCUE ...


HE WAS AN ODD TEACHER ...
SO ELUSIVE... SO HARD TO FIGURE OUT.
猿飛 アスマ


BUT TO ME, HE WAS STILL A TERRIFIC ROLE MODEL.

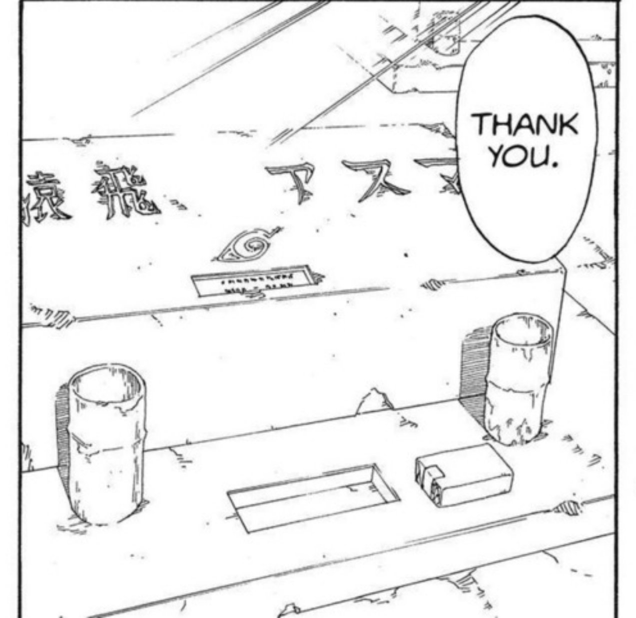



SHF
AND NOW IT'S MY TURN.



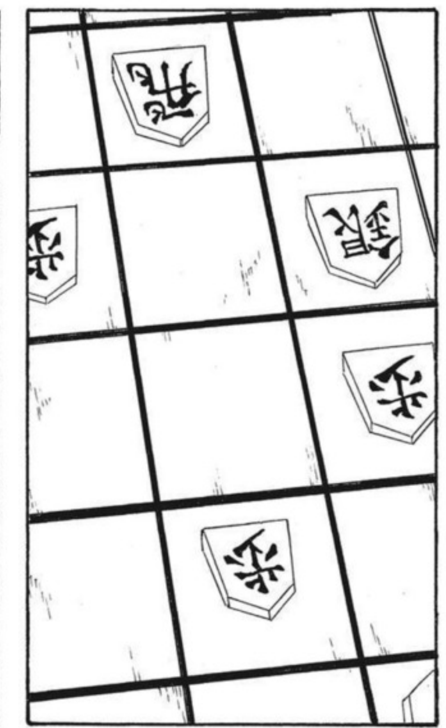
WHEN THAT BABY ARRIVES ...
IT'LL BE MY TURN AS GUARDIAN AND MASTER.








READ THIS WAY




DAD, YOU'RE MUCH BETTER AT THIS THAN ASUMA.


SNAP

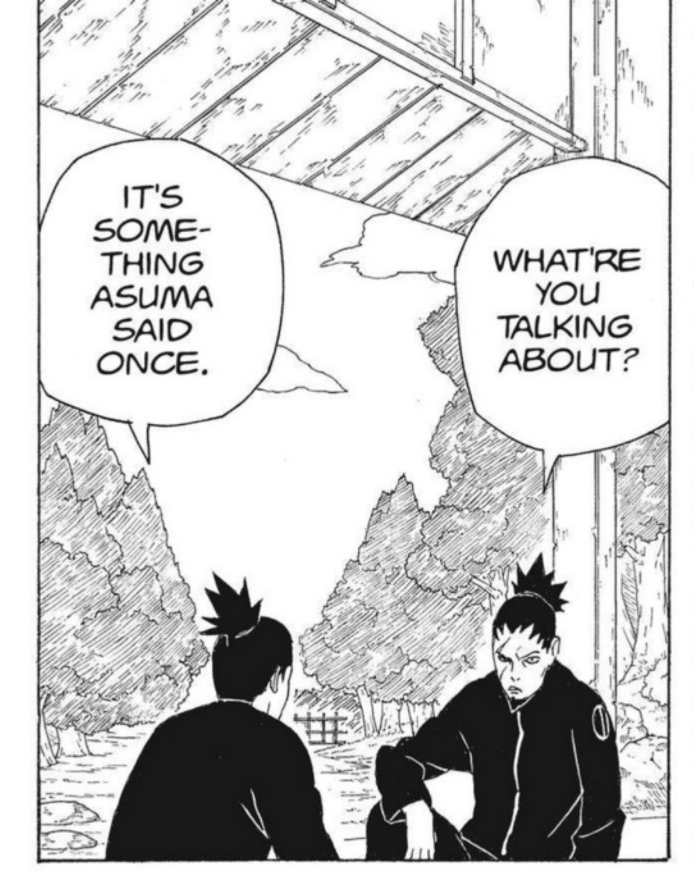

CLIMBING SILVER, EH?
SNAP


WELL, YOU KNOW. WHEN DEFENDING THE BLACK KING AGAINST A STRONGER OPPONENT ...
SACRIFICE IS UNAVOIDABLE.

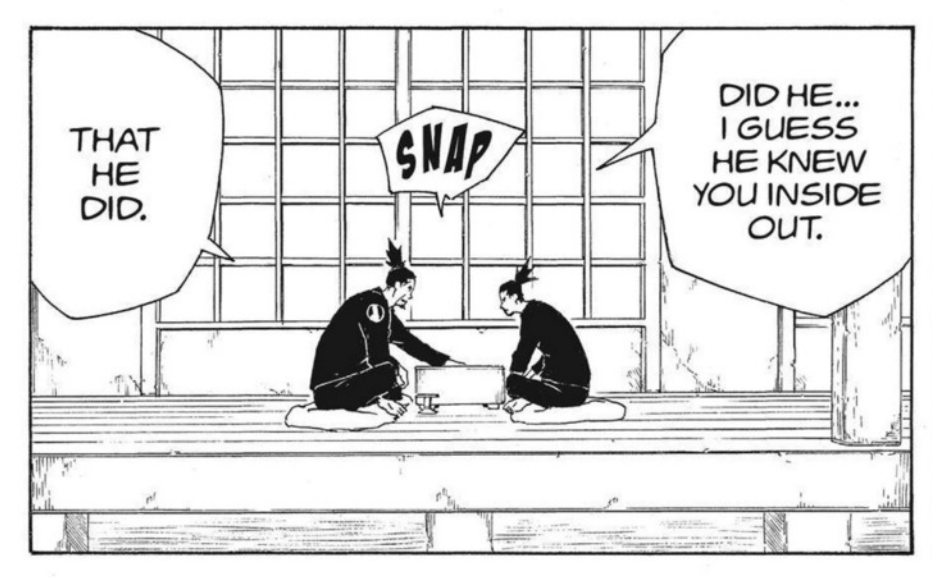

LOOK, IF YOU RETREAT THAT WAY...
MY KNIGHT CAN BARREL RIGHT UP HERE.
SNAP


AND NO MATTER WHICH OF MY GOLD GENERALS GETS AWAY, YOUR BISHOP WILL ENTER AND BE PROMOTED ...
BOY, THAT'S ONE DEVIOUS KNIGHT YOU'VE GOT THERE.


IF KONOHA'S SHINOBI WERE SHOGI PIECES...
THAT WOULD BE ME.


WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
IT'S SOME-THING ASUMA SAID ONCE.


...


SNAP
DID HE... I GUESS HE KNEW YOU INSIDE OUT.
THAT HE DID.

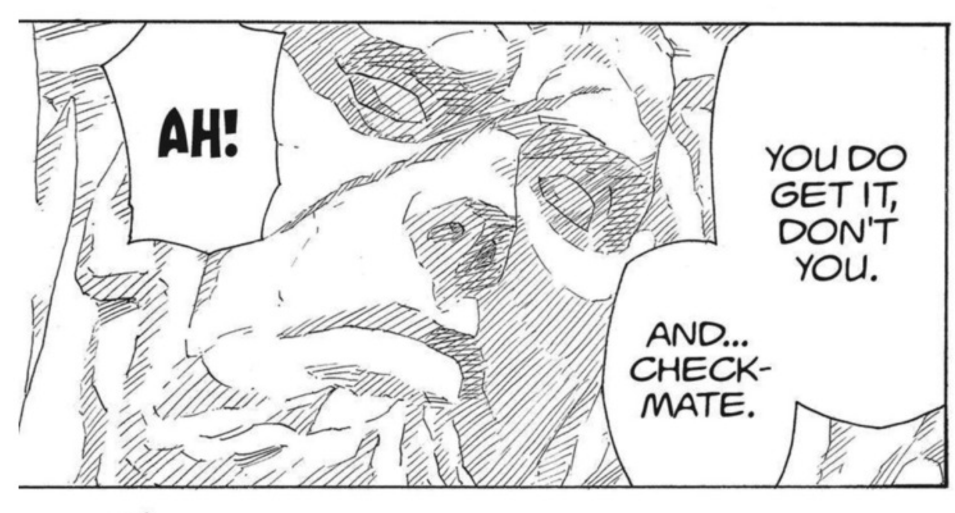

王
SNAP


SO THEN... WHO'S THE BLACK KING?


...

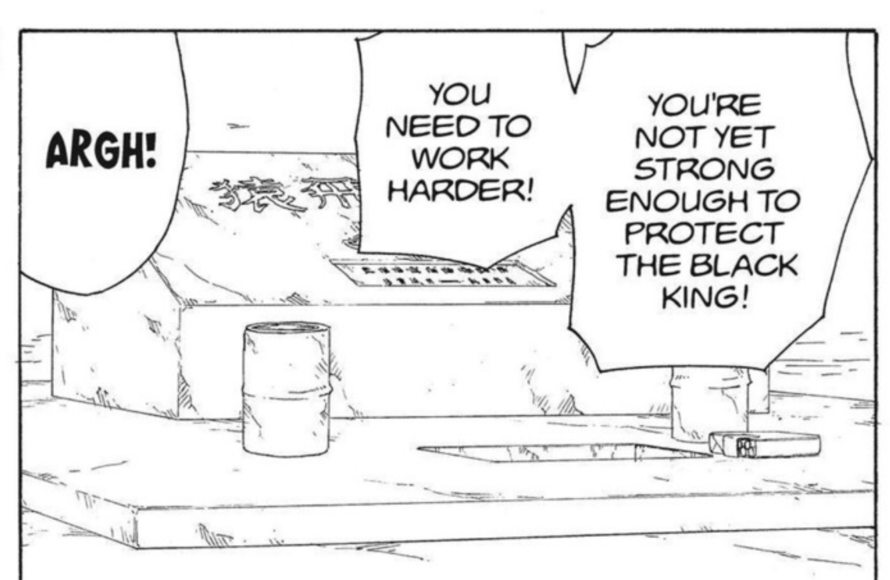

THE CHILDREN WHO WILL CARRY KONOHA ON THEIR SHOULDERS.
THEY'RE THE BLACK KING.


...

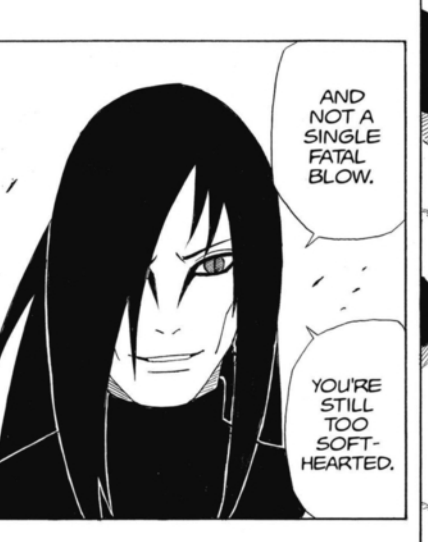

YOU DO GET IT, DON'T YOU.
AND... CHECKMATE.
AH!



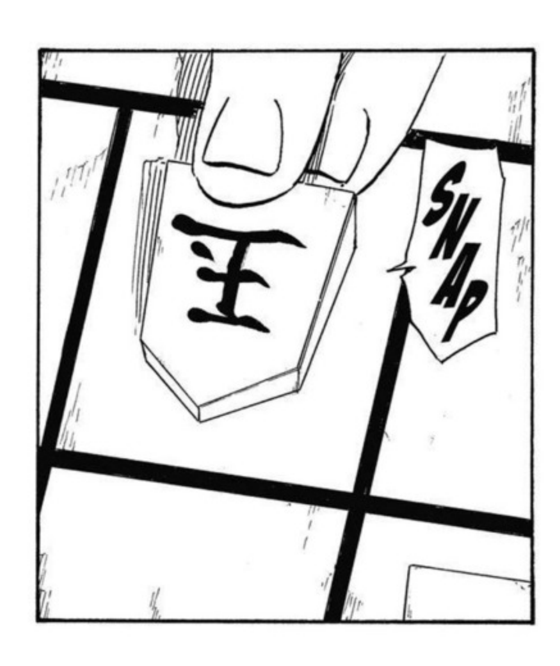

THOK


YOU'RE NOT YET STRONG ENOUGH TO PROTECT THE BLACK KING!
YOU NEED TO WORK HARDER!
ARGH!

DID I GET THEM ALL?
AWG!
ERF...
UNGH!

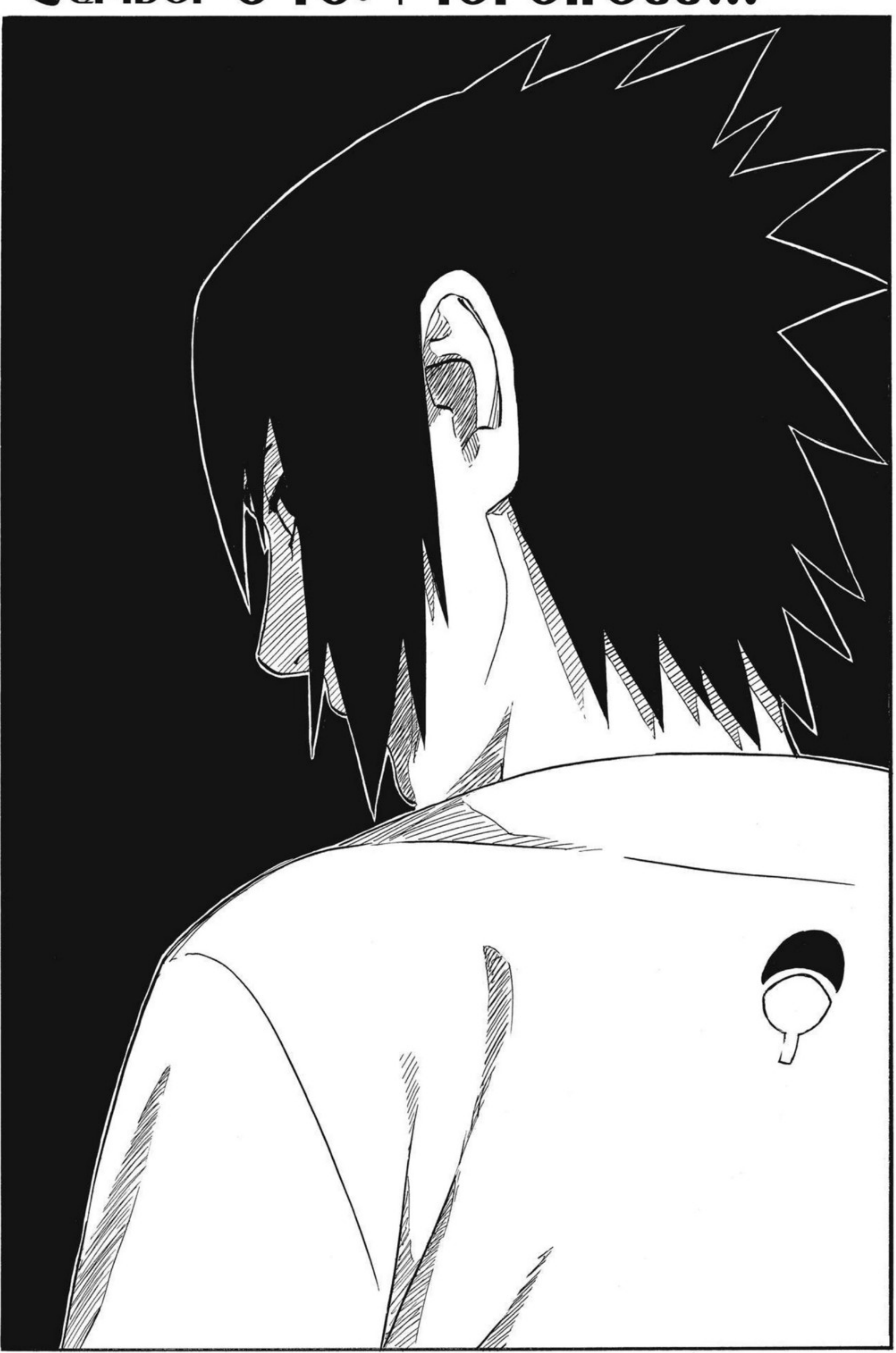

AND NOT A SINGLE FATAL BLOW.
YOU'RE STILL TOO SOFT-HEARTED.


THEY'RE NOT THE ONES I'M SETTING OUT TO KILL.

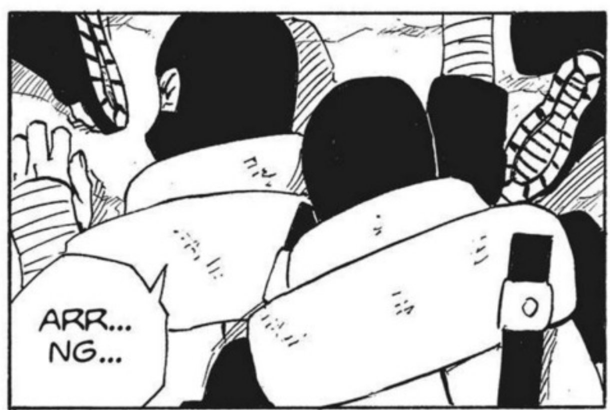


王
SNAP

Number 343: Merciless...




URK...

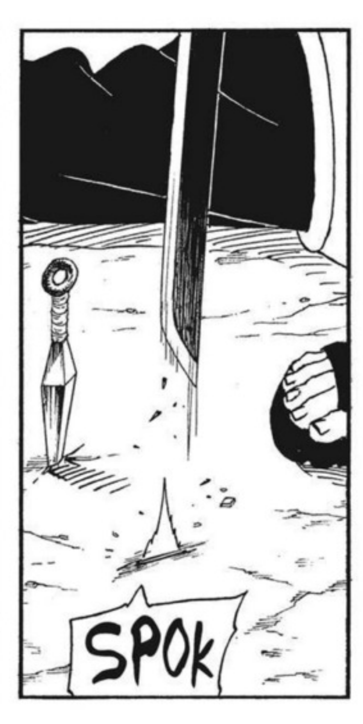

ARR...
NG...


SO LONG AS YOU HAVE MERCY...
YOU CANNOT BEST ITACHI.

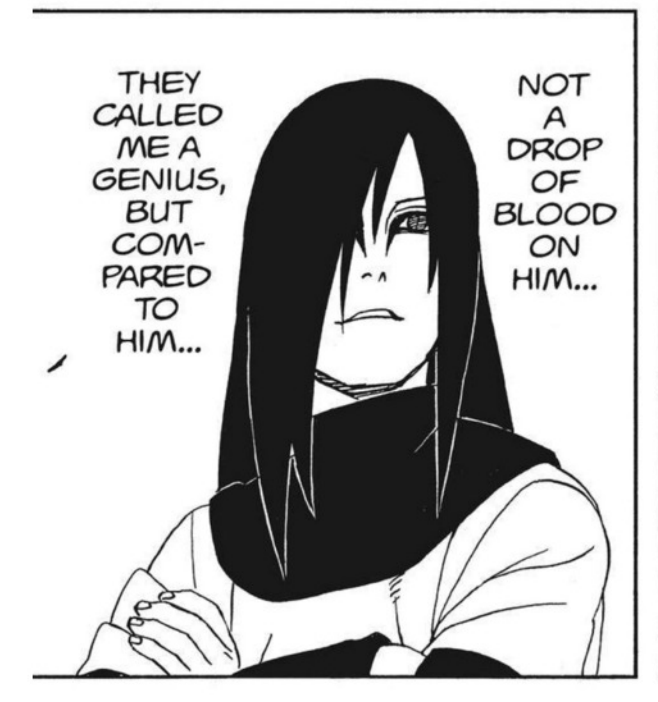

SST


READ
THIS
WAY

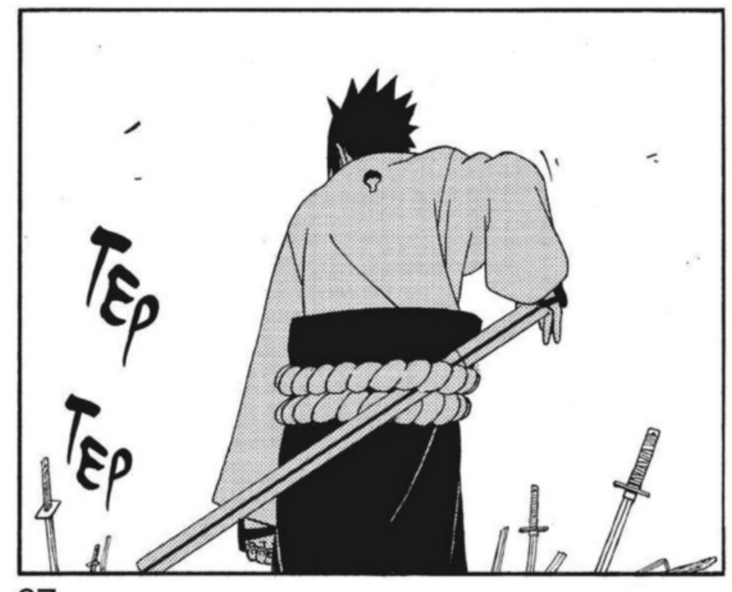

I'LL BE MERCILESS ENOUGH WHEN I SEE HIM.
THAT WON'T TAKE ANY EFFORT.


SPOK


TAK


NOT A DROP OF BLOOD ON HIM...
THEY CALLED ME A GENIUS, BUT COM-PARED TO HIM...


SHING


TEP
TEP





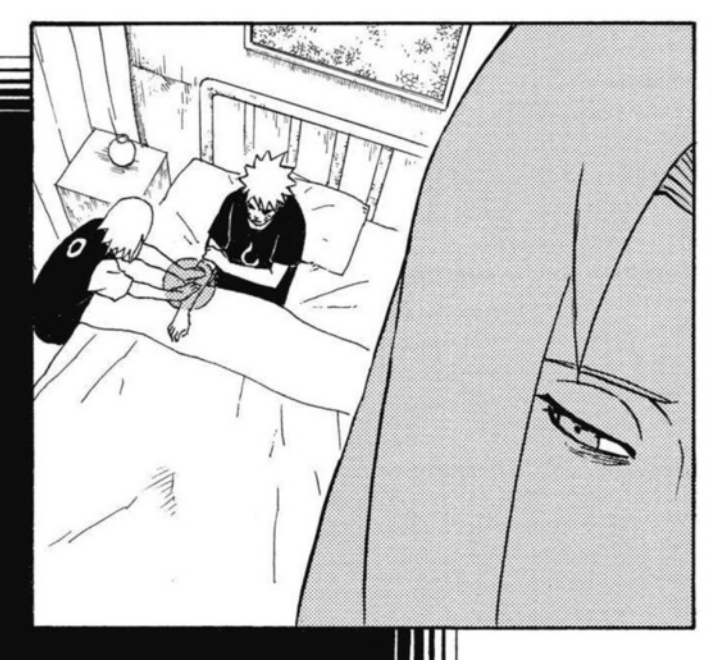
JUST A LITTLE LONGER...
A LITTLE MORE PATIENCE, AND HE'S MINE!





(ICHIRAKU)

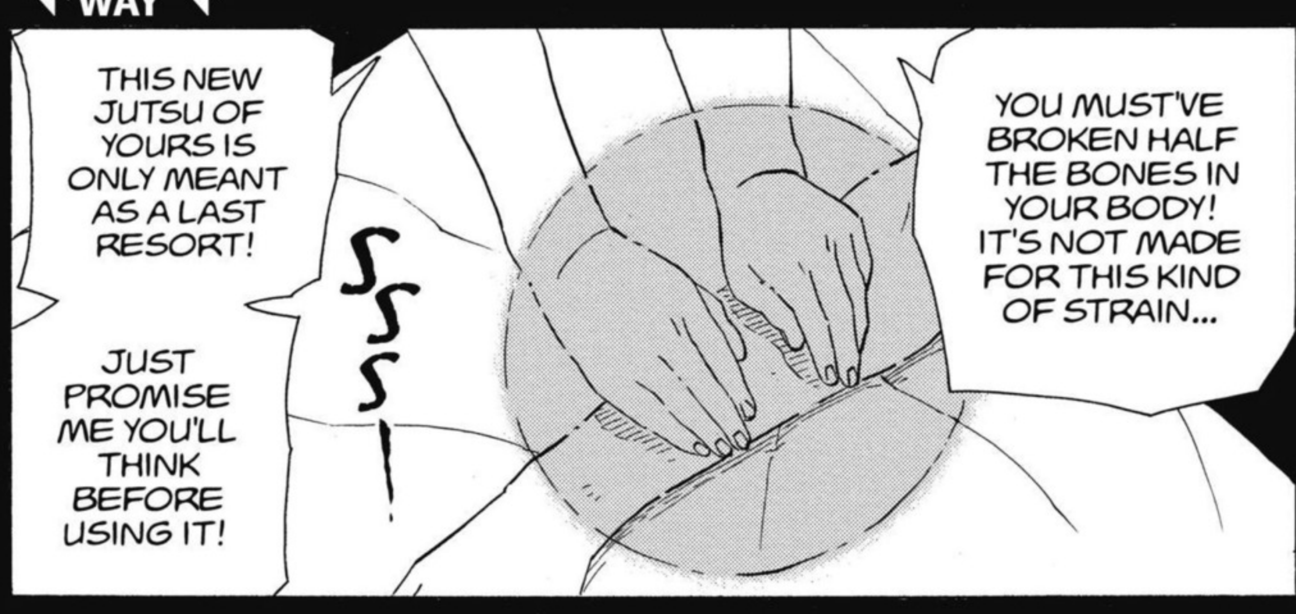




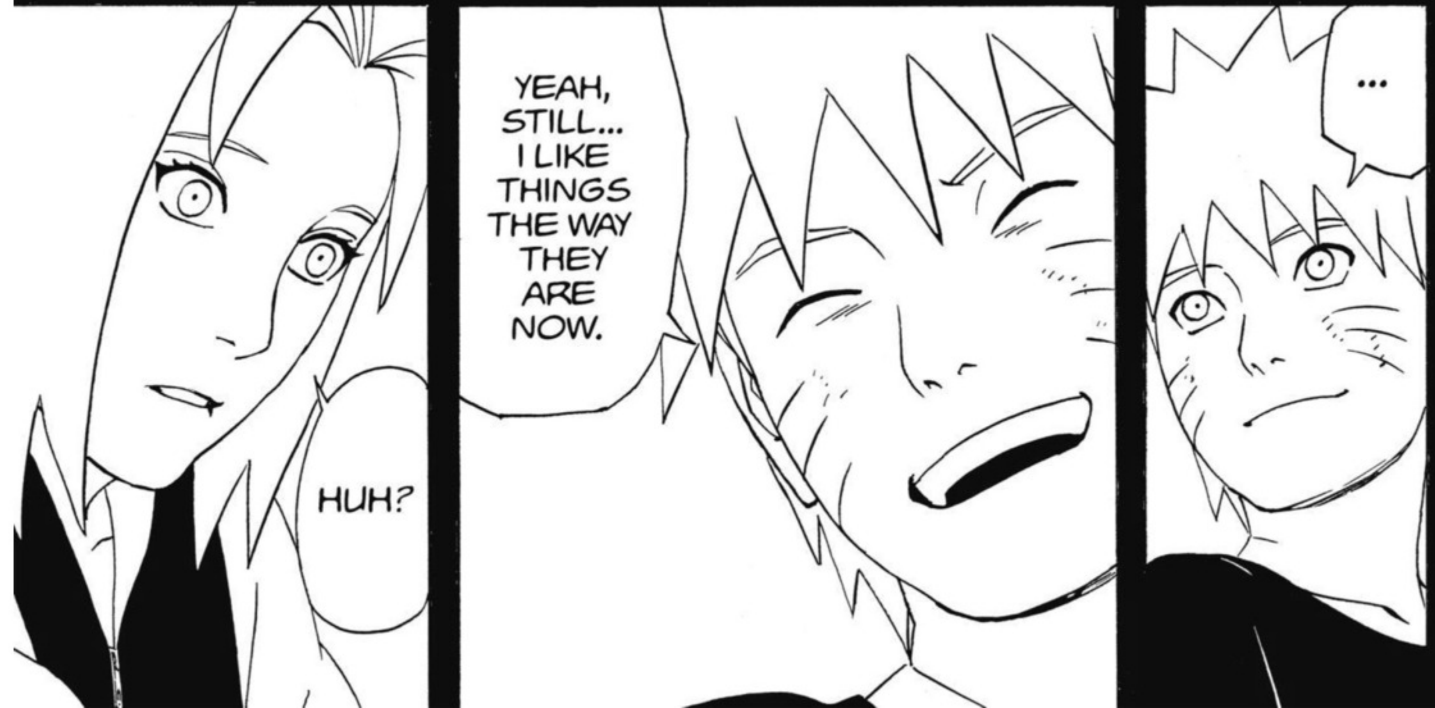


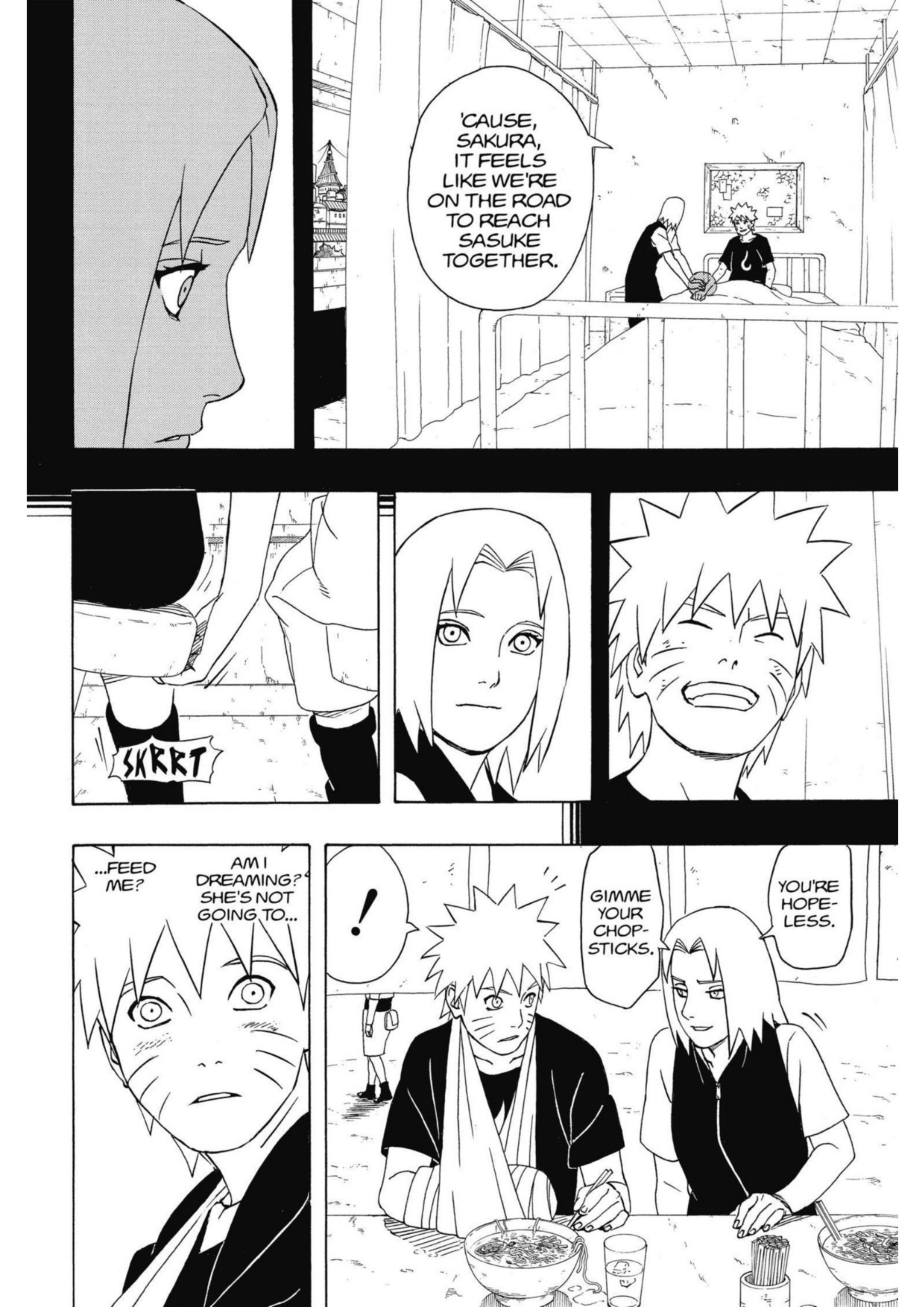



READ THIS WAY


YOU MUST'VE BROKEN HALF THE BONES IN YOUR BODY! IT'S NOT MADE FOR THIS KIND OF STRAIN...
SSSI
THIS NEW JUTSU OF YOURS IS ONLY MEANT AS A LAST RESORT!
JUST PROMISE ME YOU'LL THINK BEFORE USING IT!

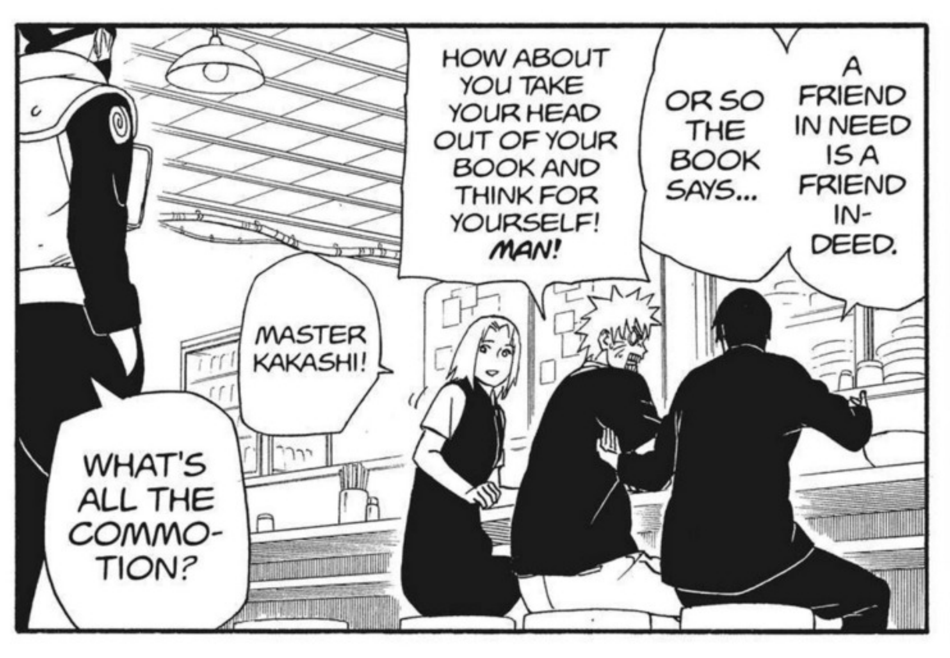

HEH...HEY, IT'S NO BIG DEAL SO LONG AS I'VE GOT YOU AROUND TO FIX ME.
THAT'S NOT THE POINT!
THERE ARE LIMITS TO WHAT I CAN PATCH UP! MEDICAL NINJUTSU IS A SCIENCE, NOT A MIRACLE CURE!

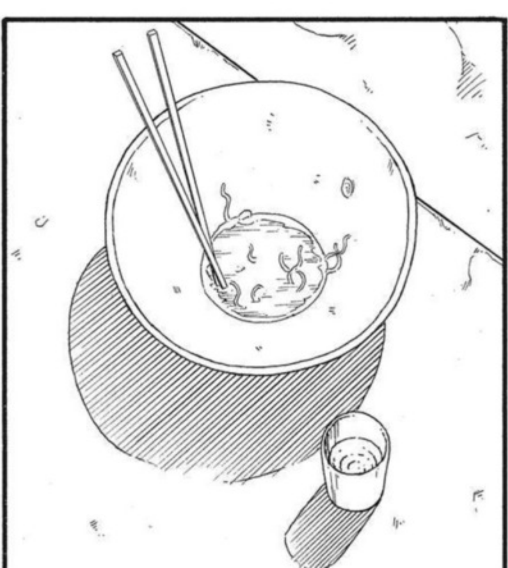

...
YEAH, STILL... I LIKE THINGS THE WAY THEY ARE NOW.
HUH?


'CAUSE, SAKURA, IT FEELS LIKE WE'RE ON THE ROAD TO REACH SASUKE TOGETHER.
SKRRT
YOU'RE HOPE-LESS.
GIMME YOUR CHOP-STICKS.
!
AM I DREAMING? SHE'S NOT GOING TO...
...FEED ME?

NOW SAY AH... ♪
TWIKK
HOT!!!
IT'S TOO HOT!! AND WHO ASKED FOR YOUR HELP?!
ZWIP



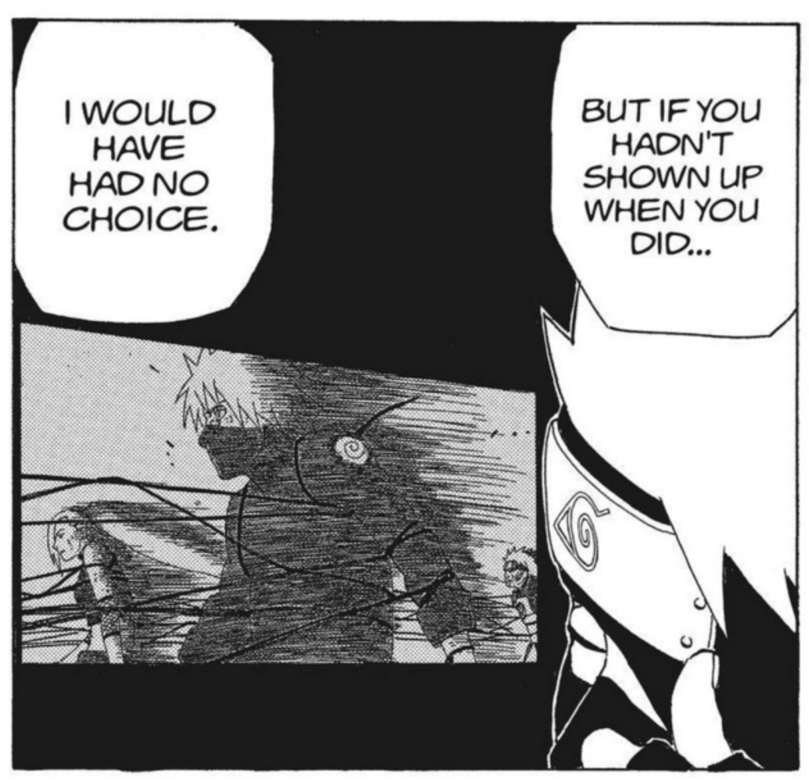






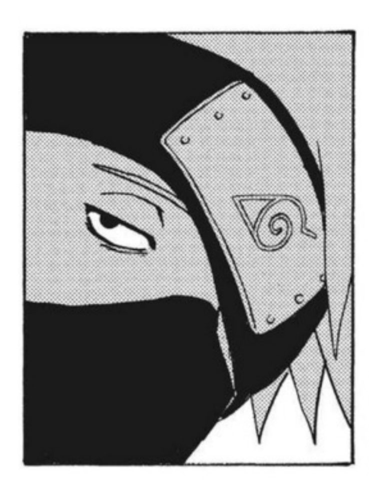

MASTER KAKASHI, HOW ARE YOU EVEN OUT OF BED?
WHY DOES EVERYONE KEEP ASKING THAT?
HMPH.


PSSH.
I DIDN'T EVEN NEED TO USE MY MANGEKYO SHARINGAN THIS TIME.

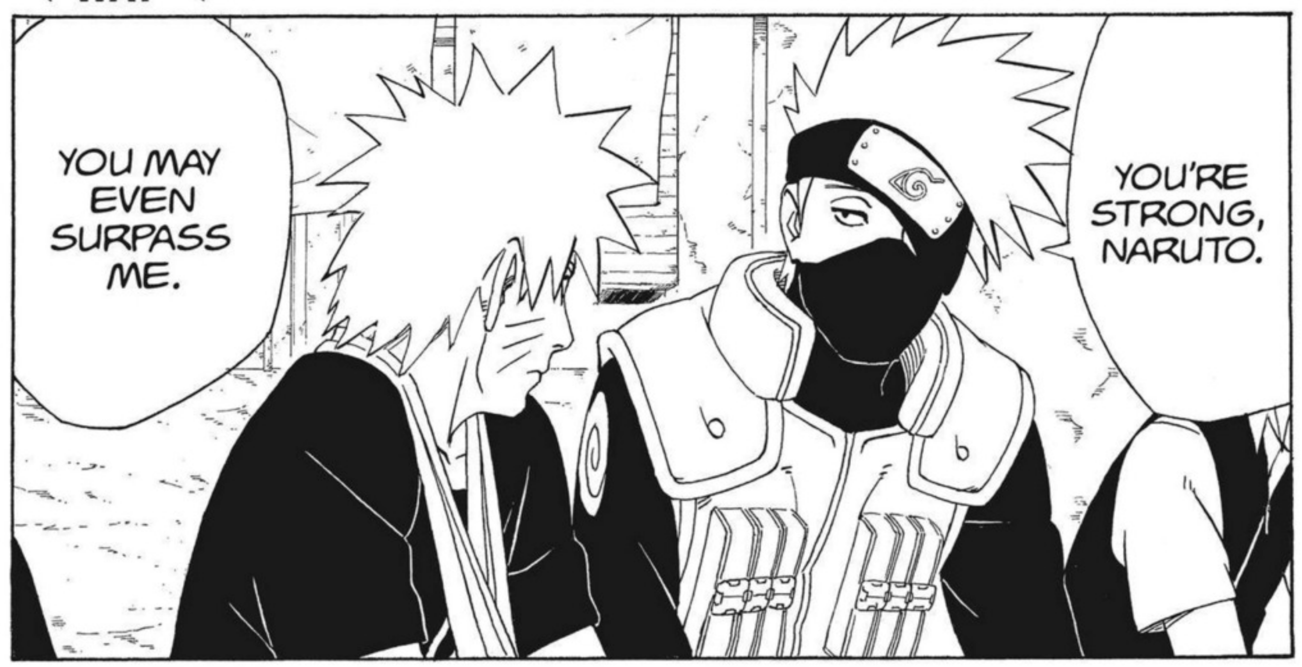

BUT IF YOU HADN'T SHOWN UP WHEN YOU DID...
I WOULD HAVE HAD NO CHOICE.


AND THEN I ***WOULD*** BE IN BED RIGHT NOW... IN THE HOSPITAL!
HEH.

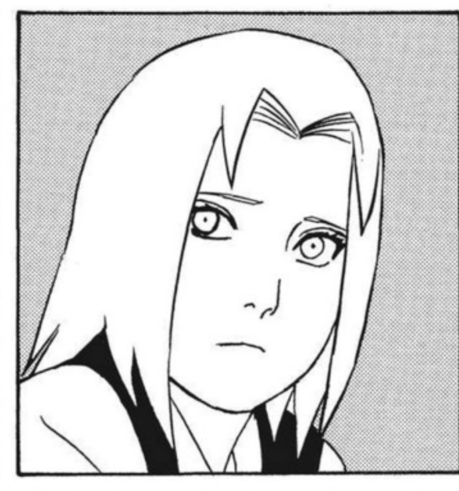


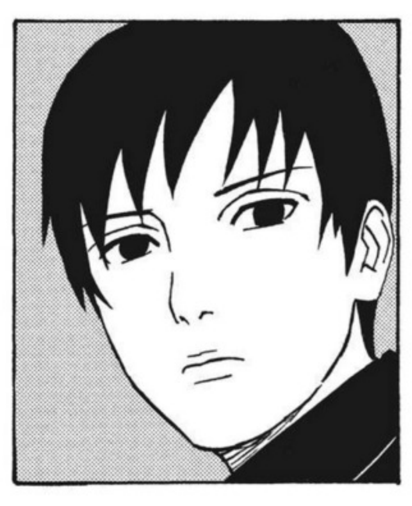



READ THIS WAY


YOU'RE STRONG, NARUTO.
YOU MAY EVEN SURPASS ME.

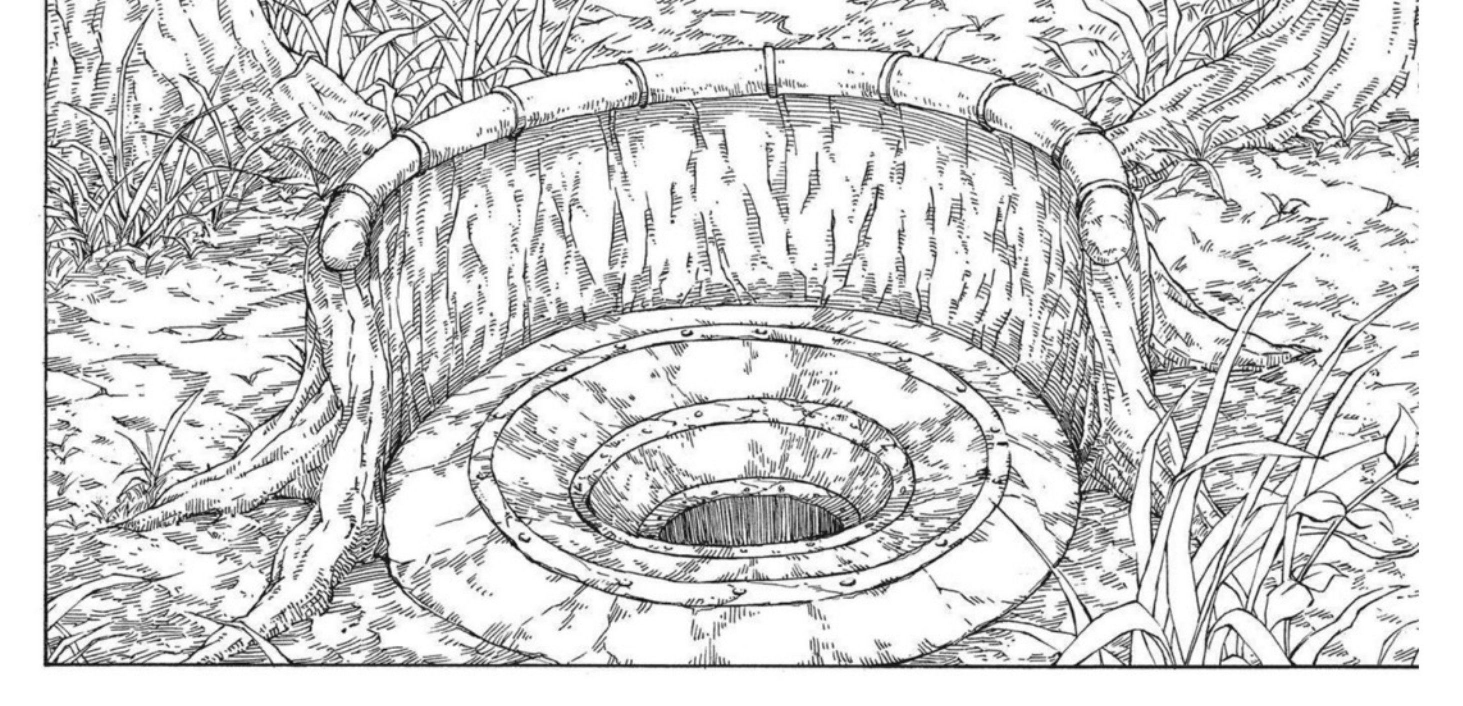


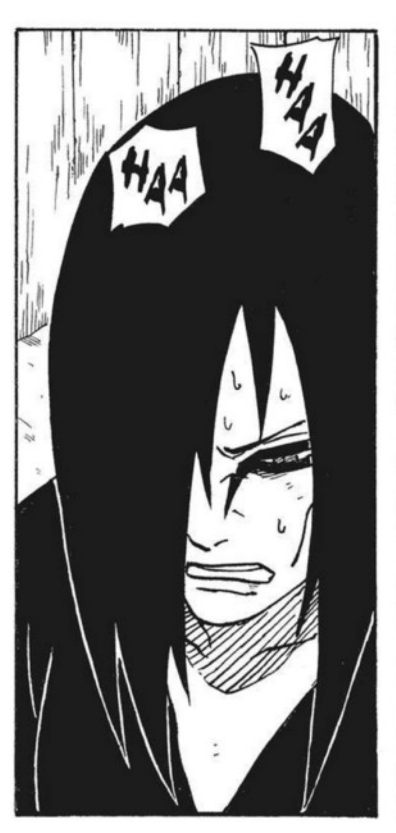


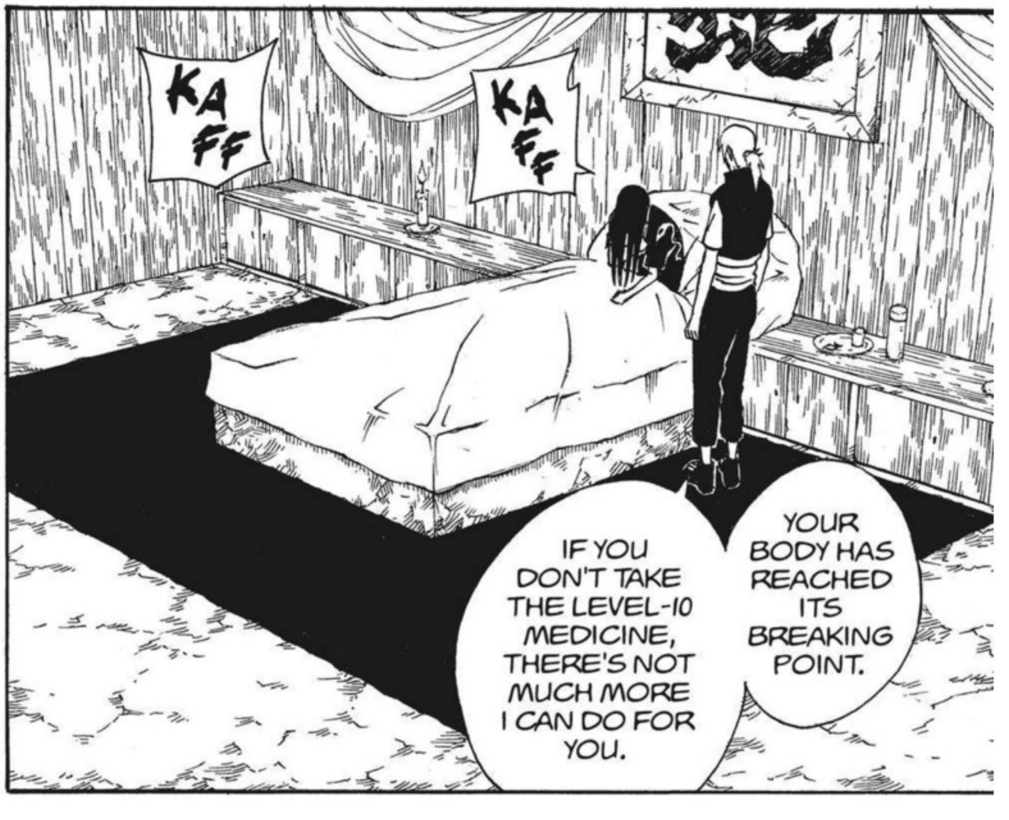



THING IS, THE MORE PROFOUND THE JUTSU...
...THE RISKIER IT IS TO WIELD. JUST REMEMBER THAT.


YEAH...




HAA
HAA


KAFF
KAFF
YOUR BODY HAS REACHED ITS BREAKING POINT.
IF YOU DON'T TAKE THE LEVEL-10 MEDICINE, THERE'S NOT MUCH MORE I CAN DO FOR YOU.


SHK
I'LL GO GET THE OTHER MEDICINE.


CREAK
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
B-TUM


READ THIS WAY

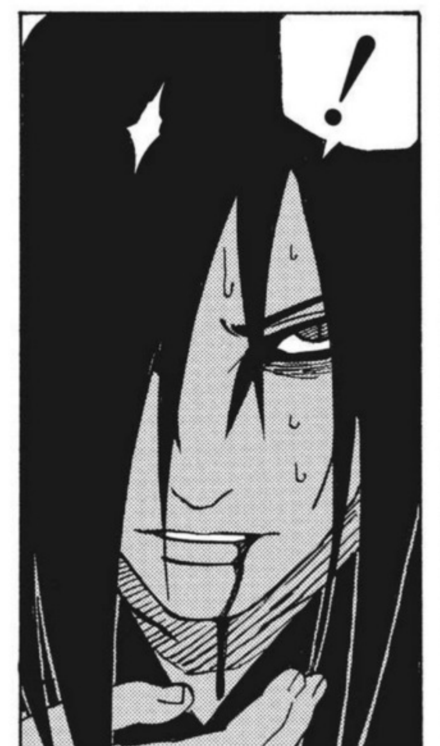

HEH...


HA HA HA HA HA HA HA.


...



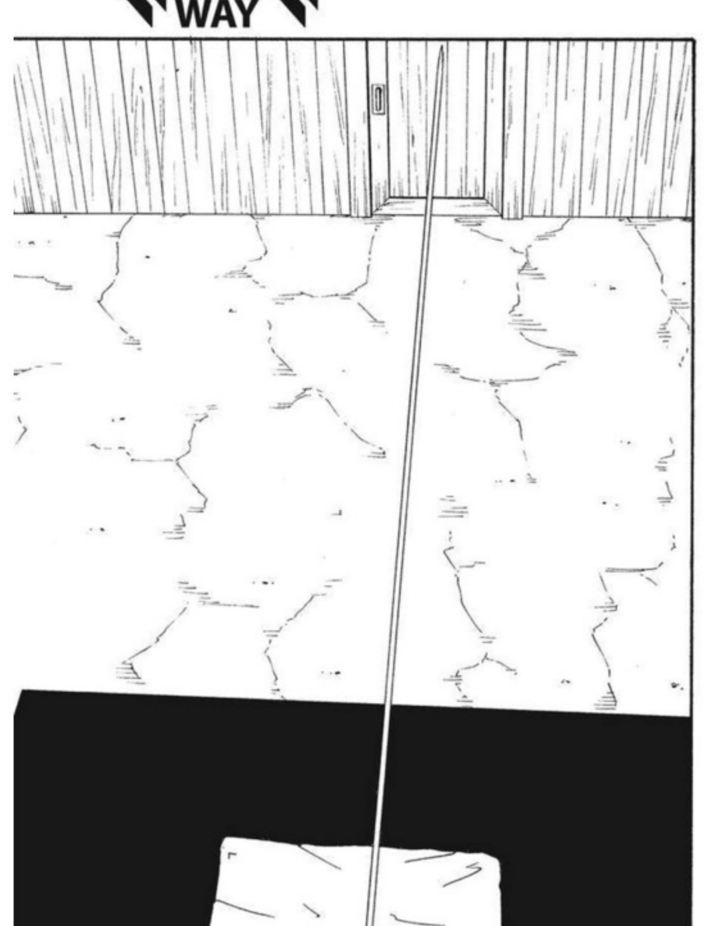

HA HA...
KAFF
KAFF


!

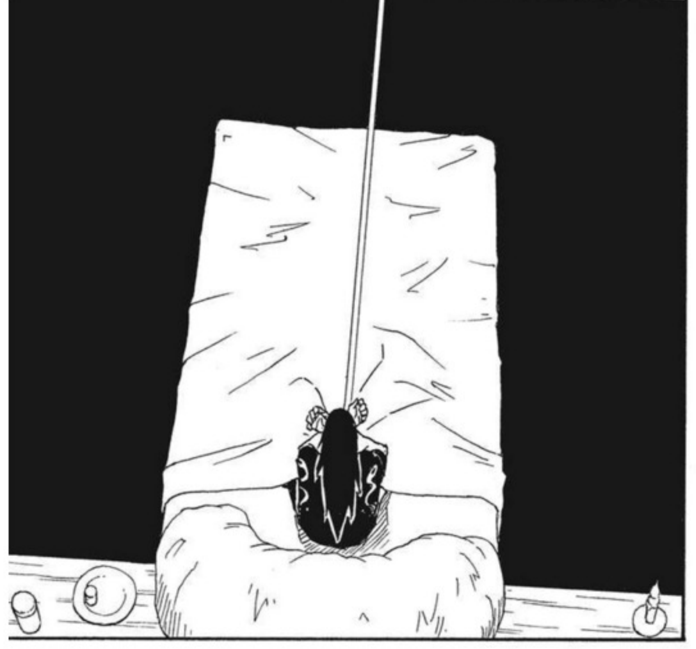

SHK
FWSSH


READ
THIS
WAY


THIS CHAKRA ...
I'VE NEVER SEEN IT CHANGE ITS FORM LIKE THIS.




WHO'S THERE?

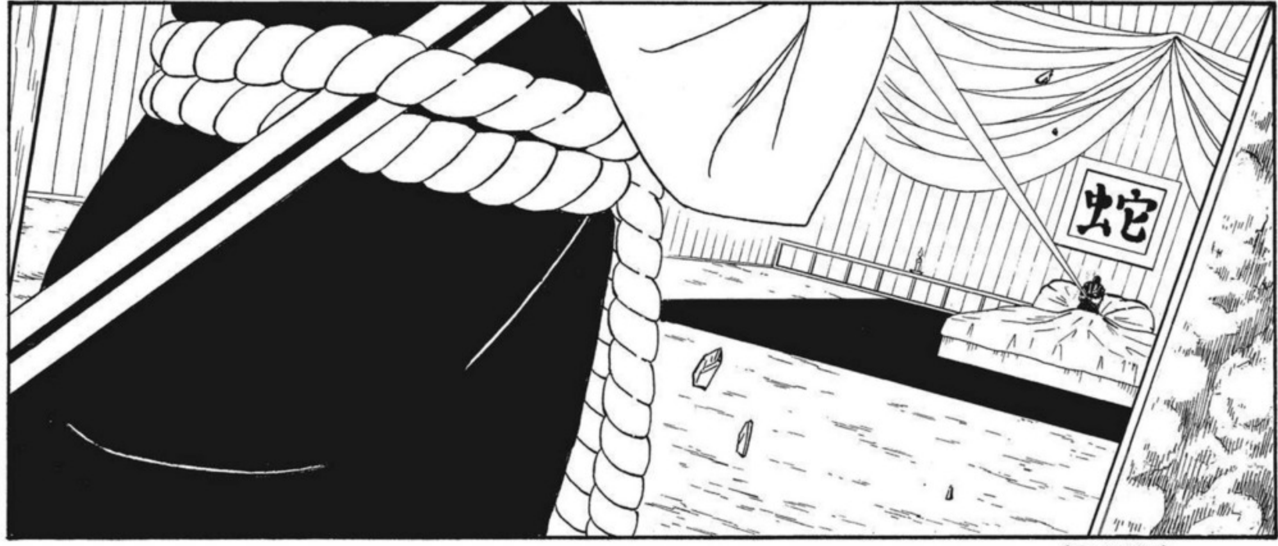


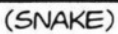

SPA KKAK KAK KAK


CHU KKA

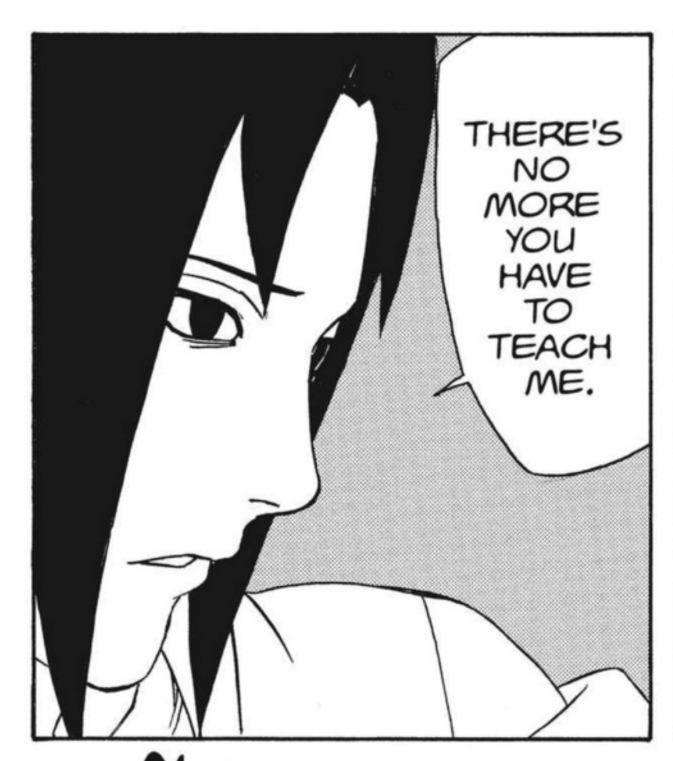



READ THIS WAY


蛇


(SNAKE)

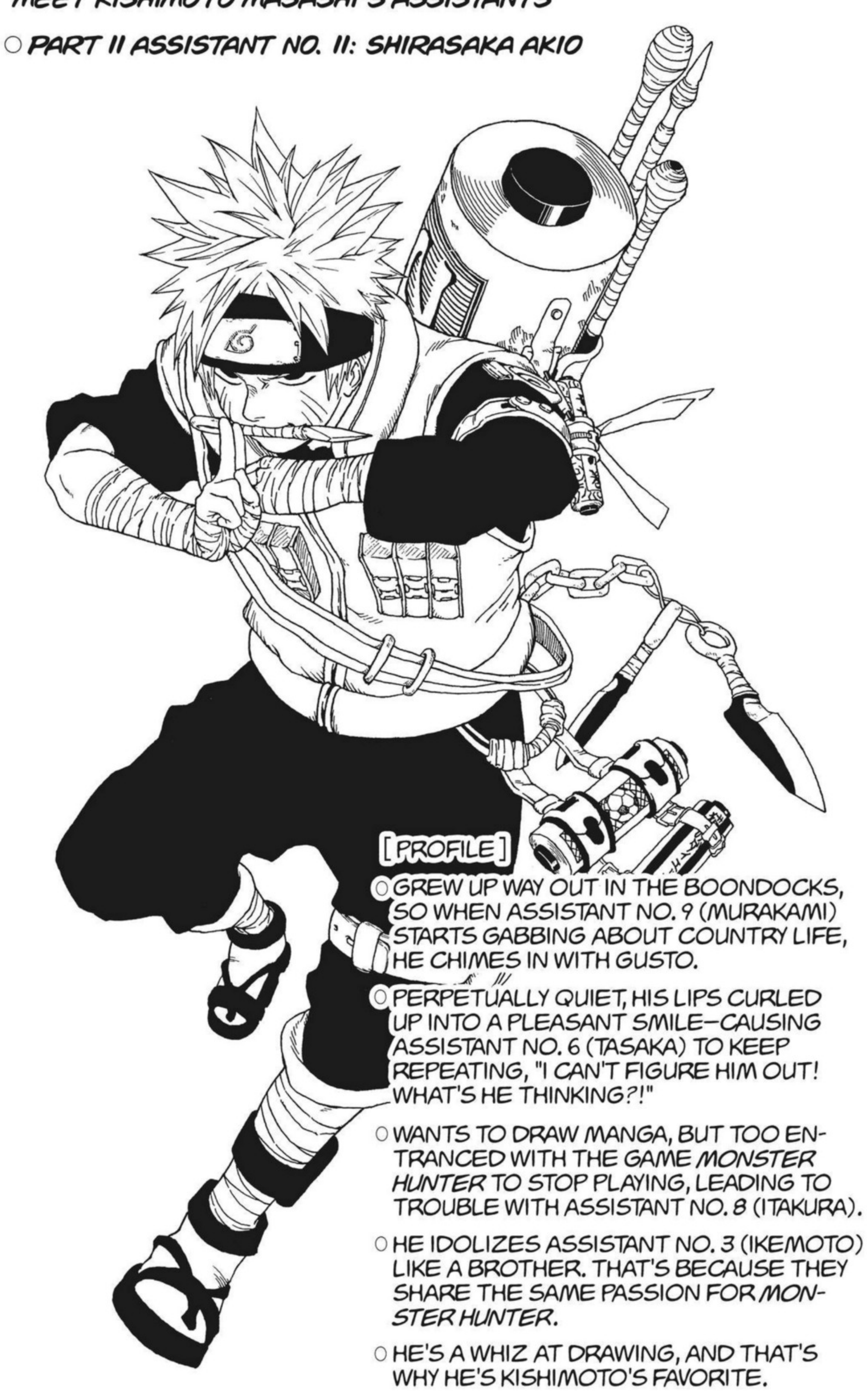

I KNEW YOU'D COME FOR ME.


THERE'S NO MORE YOU HAVE TO TEACH ME.


I CAN BE MERCI-LESS...
ZWURR
...EVEN TO YOU!
SWOO

MEET KISHIMOTO MASASHI'S ASSISTANTS

○ PART II ASSISTANT NO. 11: SHIRASAKA AKIO



[PROFILE]

- ○ GREW UP WAY OUT IN THE BOONDOCKS, SO WHEN ASSISTANT NO. 9 (MURAKAMI) STARTS GABBING ABOUT COUNTRY LIFE, HE CHIMES IN WITH GUSTO.
- ○ PERPETUALLY QUIET, HIS LIPS CURLED UP INTO A PLEASANT SMILE—CAUSING ASSISTANT NO. 6 (TASAKA) TO KEEP REPEATING, "I CAN'T FIGURE HIM OUT! WHAT'S HE THINKING?!"
- ○ WANTS TO DRAW MANGA, BUT TOO ENTRANCED WITH THE GAME *MONSTER HUNTER* TO STOP PLAYING, LEADING TO TROUBLE WITH ASSISTANT NO. 8 (ITAKURA).
- ○ HE IDOLIZES ASSISTANT NO. 3 (IKEMOTO) LIKE A BROTHER. THAT'S BECAUSE THEY SHARE THE SAME PASSION FOR *MONSTER HUNTER*.
- ○ HE'S A WHIZ AT DRAWING, AND THAT'S WHY HE'S KISHIMOTO'S FAVORITE.

Number 344: The Snake...







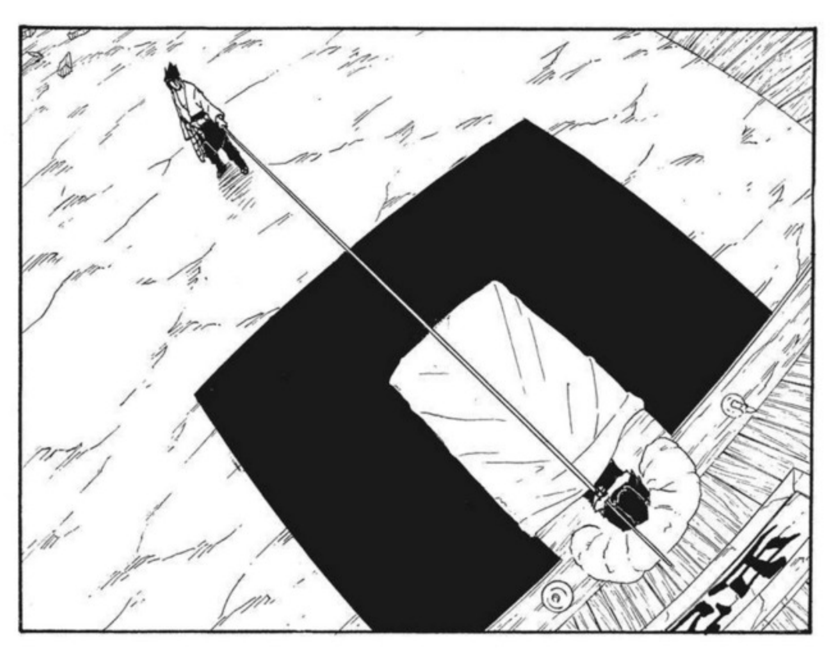




OROCHI-MARU.
I'M STRONGER THAN YOU.

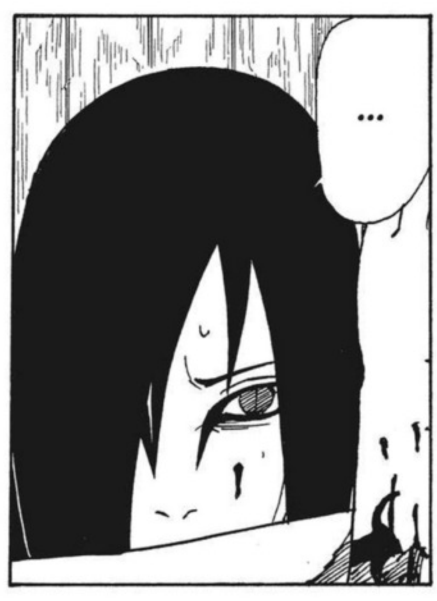








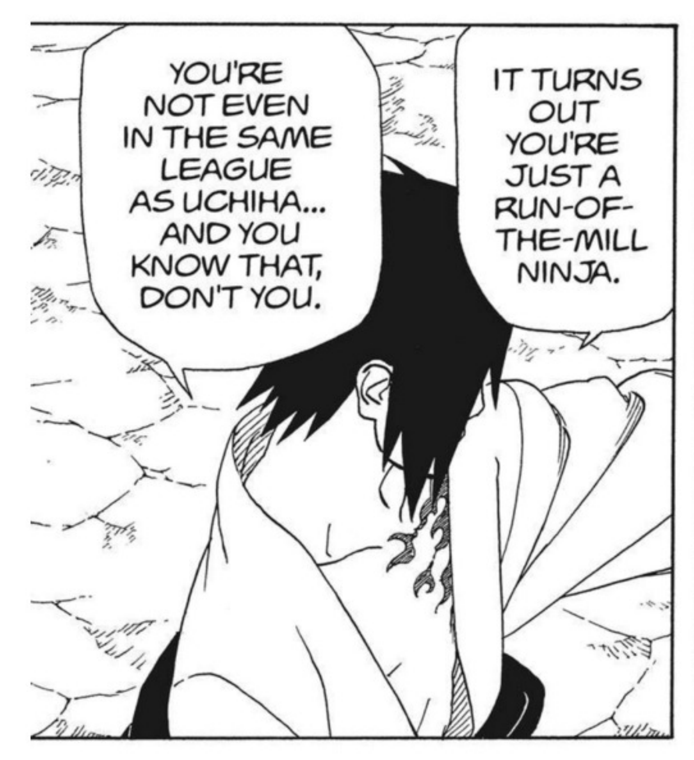

READ
THIS
WAY

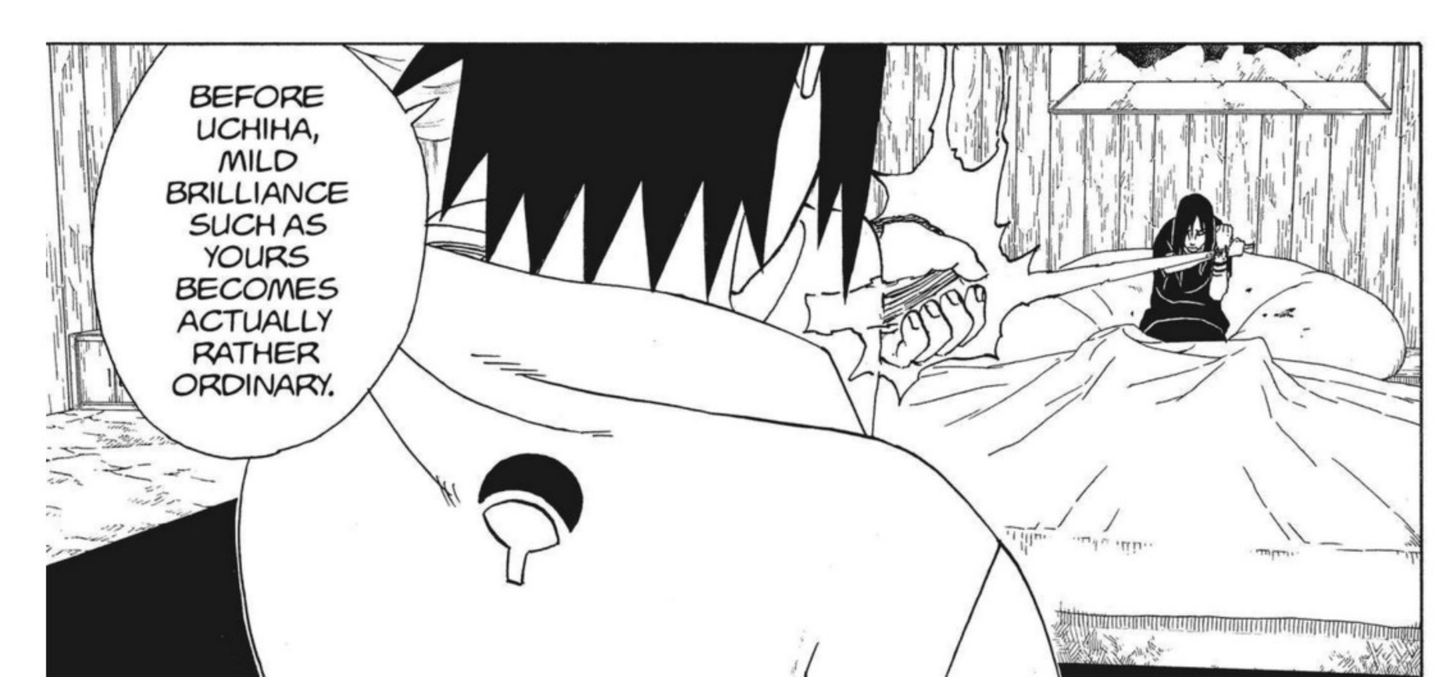

...


ITACHI WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION.
THAT'S WHY YOU CAME AFTER ME, THE BABY.


ISN'T THAT TRUE, BRIGHT EYES?
AND THEY SAY YOU'RE ONE OF THE THREE GREAT SHINOBI?

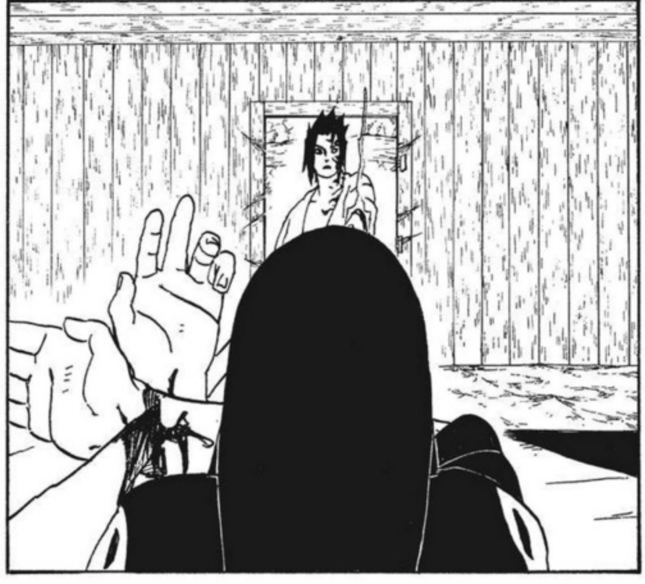


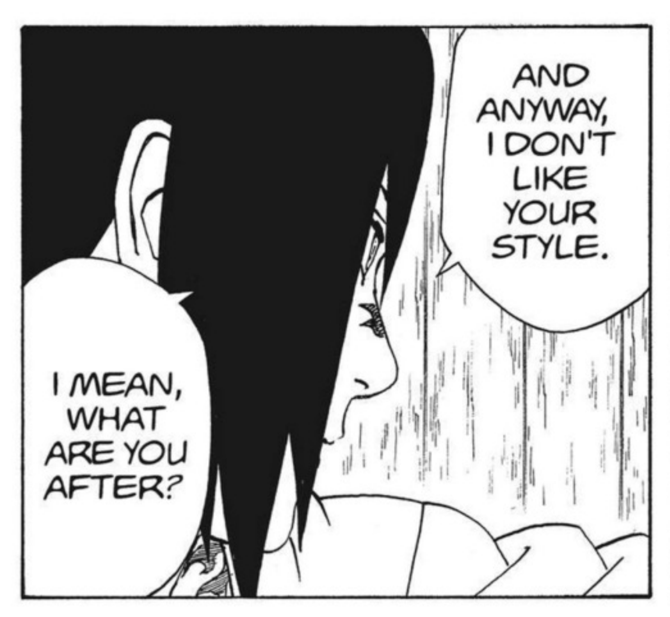

IT TURNS OUT YOU'RE JUST A RUN-OF-THE-MILL NINJA.
YOU'RE NOT EVEN IN THE SAME LEAGUE AS UCHIHA... AND YOU KNOW THAT, DON'T YOU.

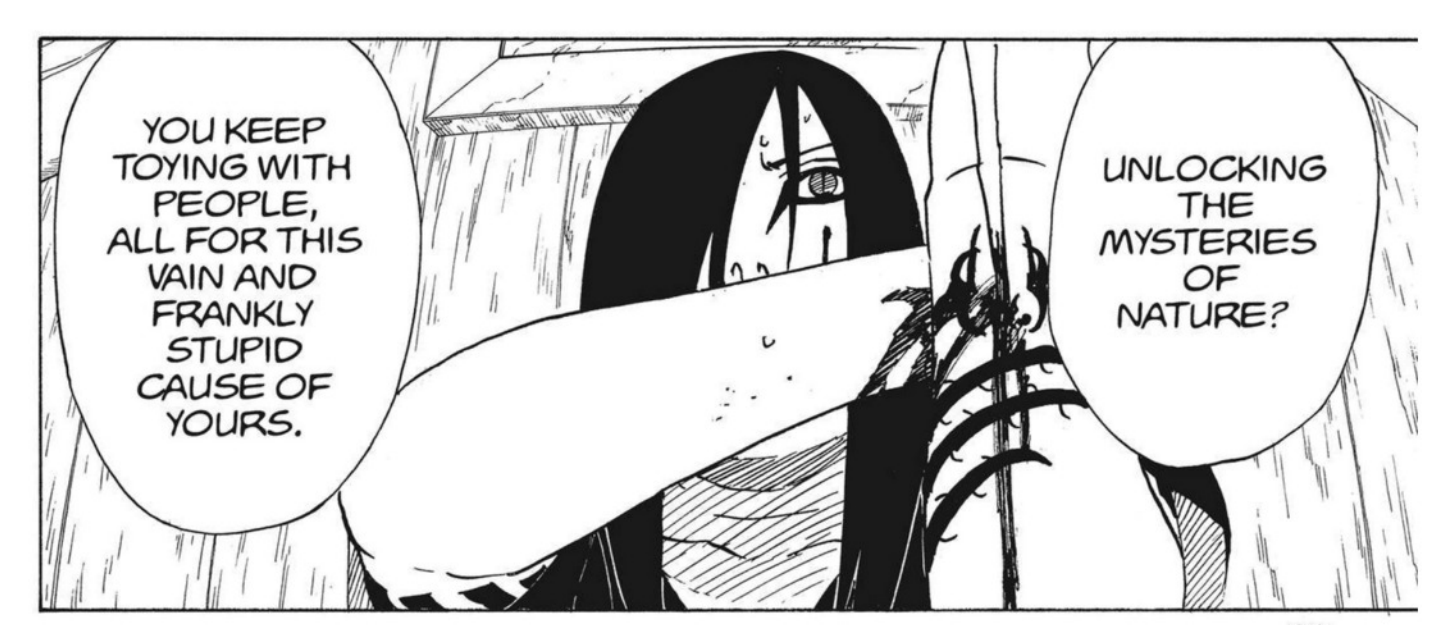

BEFORE UCHIHA, MILD BRILLIANCE SUCH AS YOURS BECOMES ACTUALLY RATHER ORDINARY.


FILLING YOURSELF UP WITH MEDICINES, LEAPING FROM BODY TO BODY...
AND THE WAY YOU COVET THE POWER OF UCHIHA ...IT'S REVOLTING.

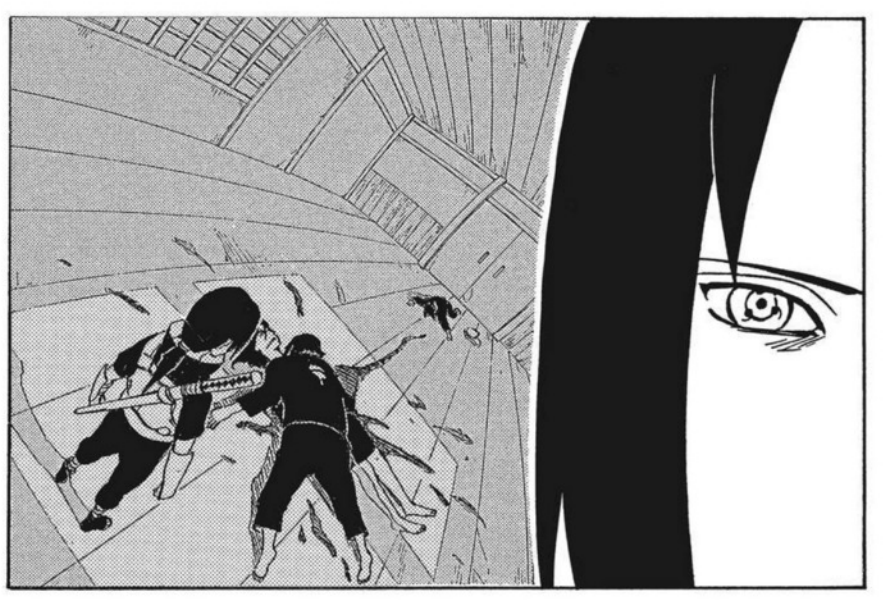

AS AN UCHIHA, ALL I SEE IS A MISERABLE WRETCH.

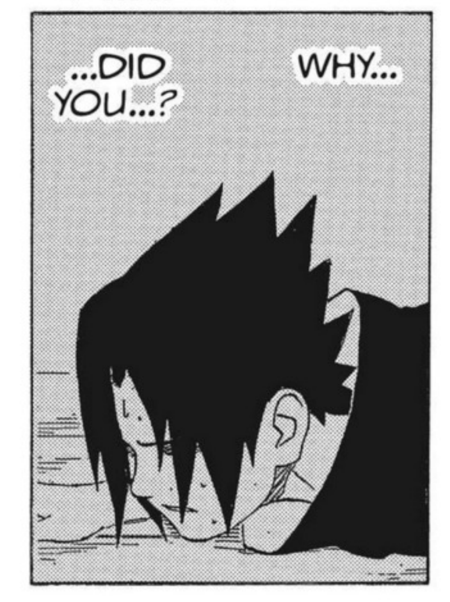


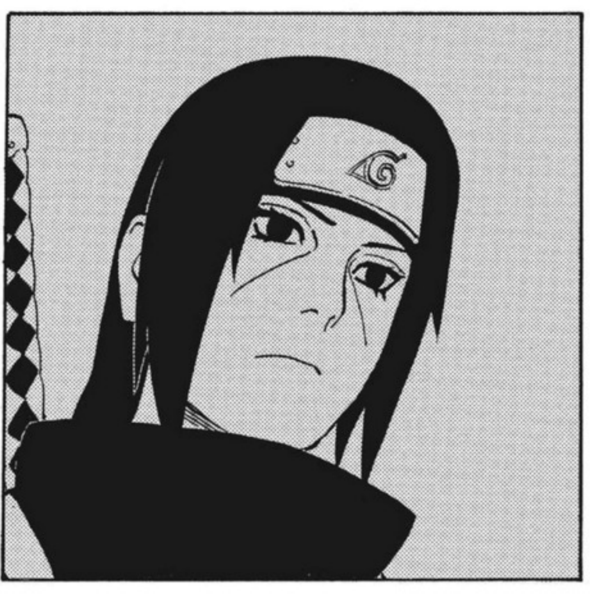

AND ANYWAY, I DON'T LIKE YOUR STYLE.
I MEAN, WHAT ARE YOU AFTER?

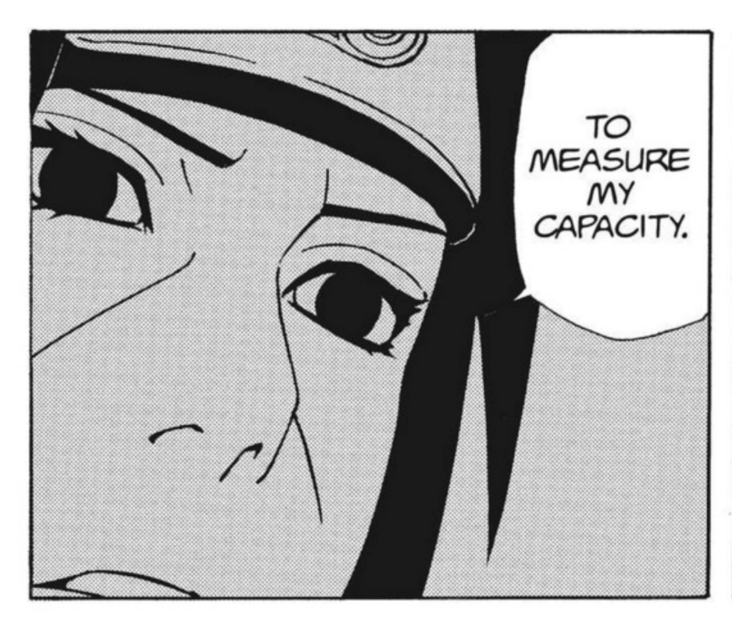

UNLOCKING THE MYSTERIES OF NATURE?
YOU KEEP TOYING WITH PEOPLE, ALL FOR THIS VAIN AND FRANKLY STUPID CAUSE OF YOURS.


READ THIS WAY




WHY...
...DID YOU...?




TO MEASURE MY CAPACITY.


MEASURE YOUR CAPACITY...
THAT'S IT...?
THAT'S... THE ONLY REASON FOR KILLING... EVERY-BODY?


I HAD TO.

FS
SH

YOU DIS-GUST ME.

SPAKKAKKAK



SPOP

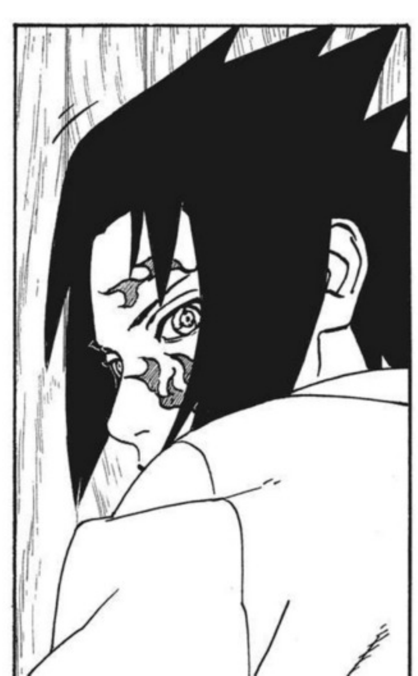
WSSH

SPLOOT

!

CHOK

PLISH

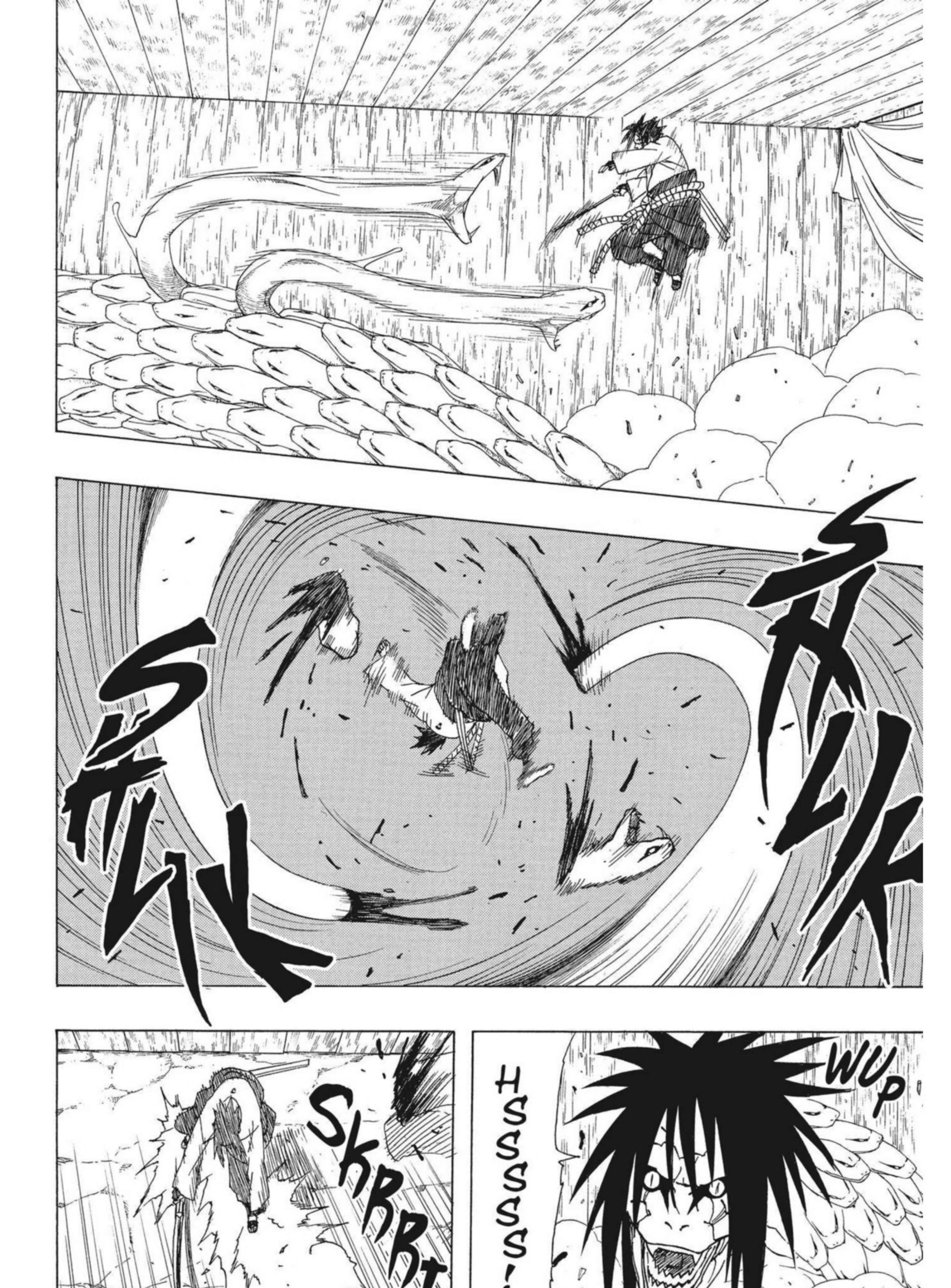


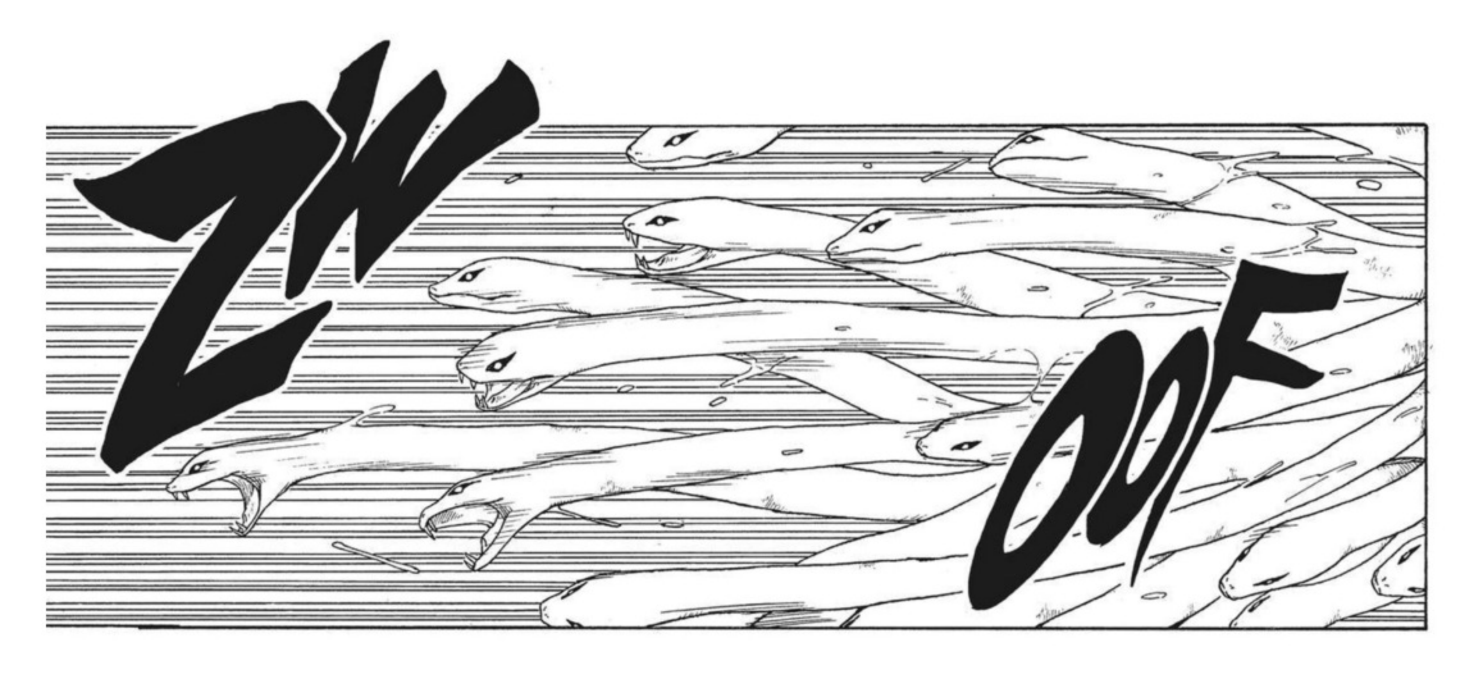
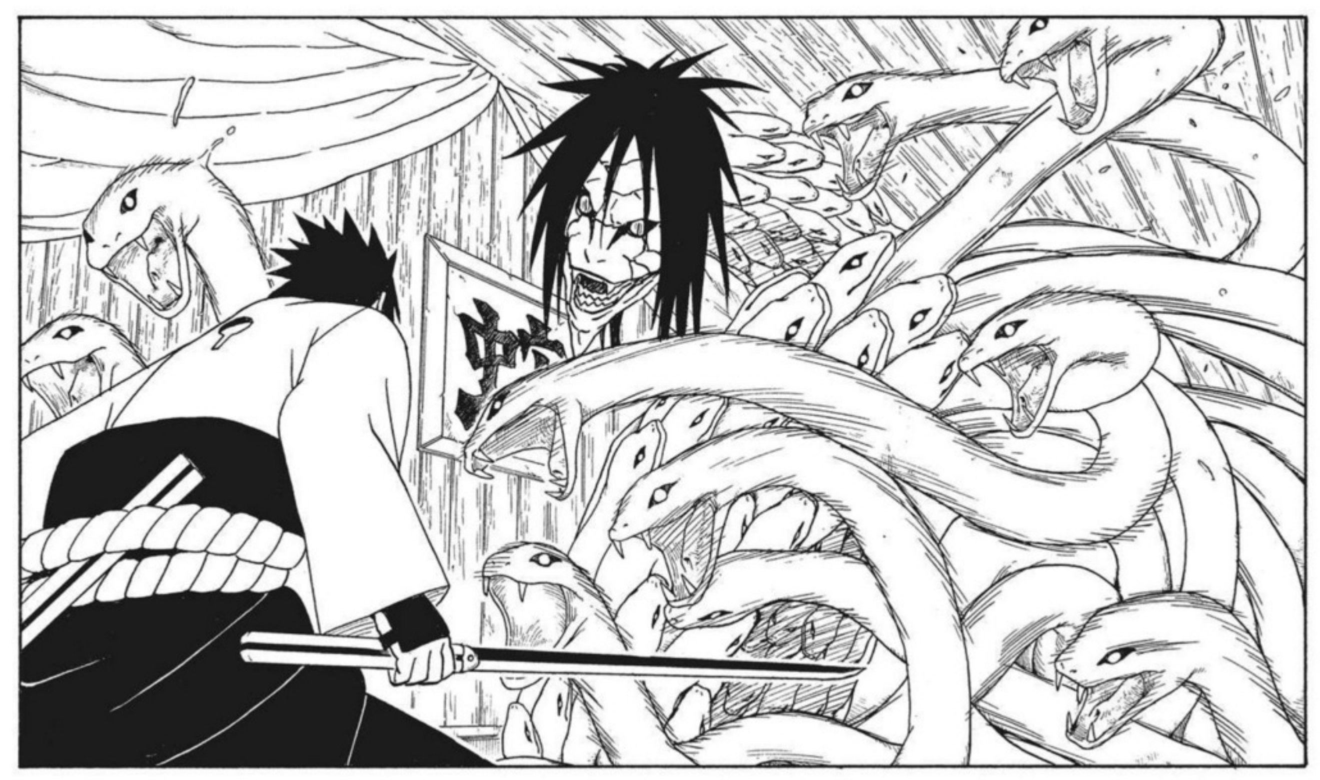
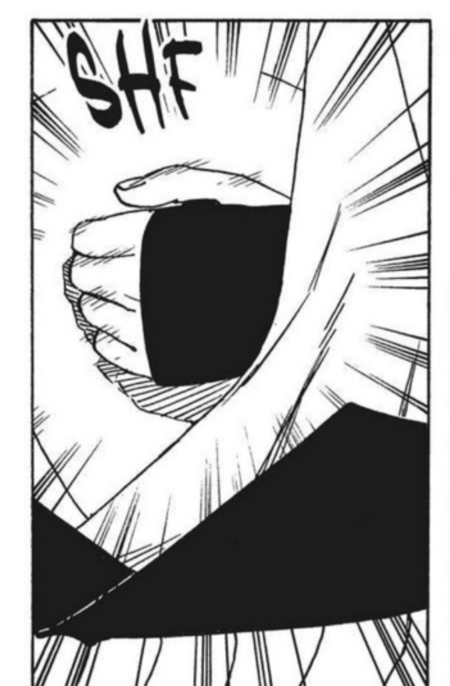


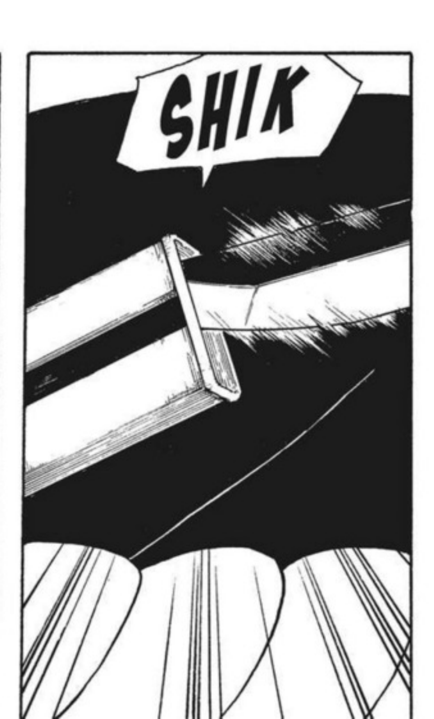

TO CHANGE BODIES...
YOU EXPERIMENTED ENDLESSLY.


READ
THIS
WAY


AND THIS IS WHAT YOU'VE BECOME.
NOW... SASUKE... YOU ARE MINE...
GIVE ME YOUR BODY!!
ZOOSH
PA
KOOM
FWOOSH


SHLK
SHLK
SKRRT
WUP
HSSSSSS!

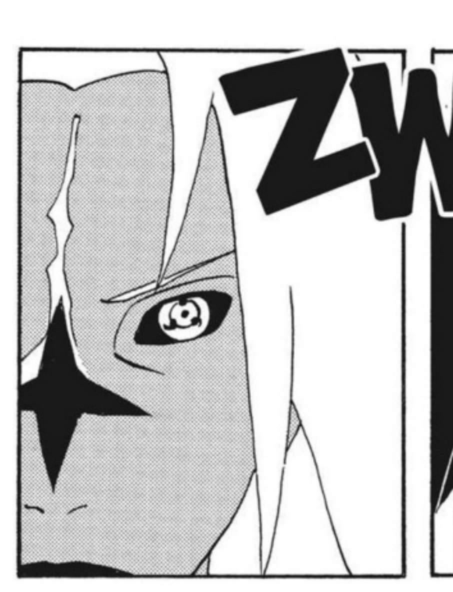

ZWOOF


SHF

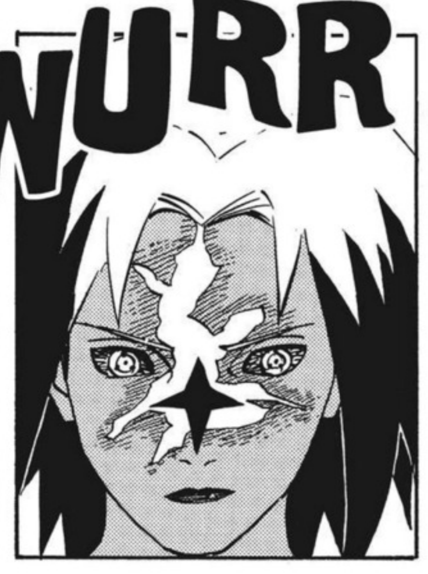
CHINK

SHIK

FZUP



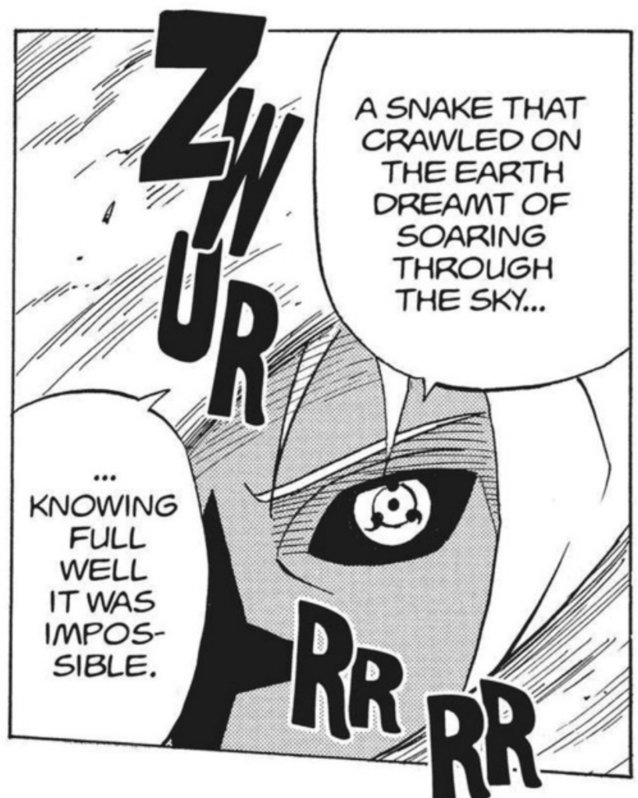








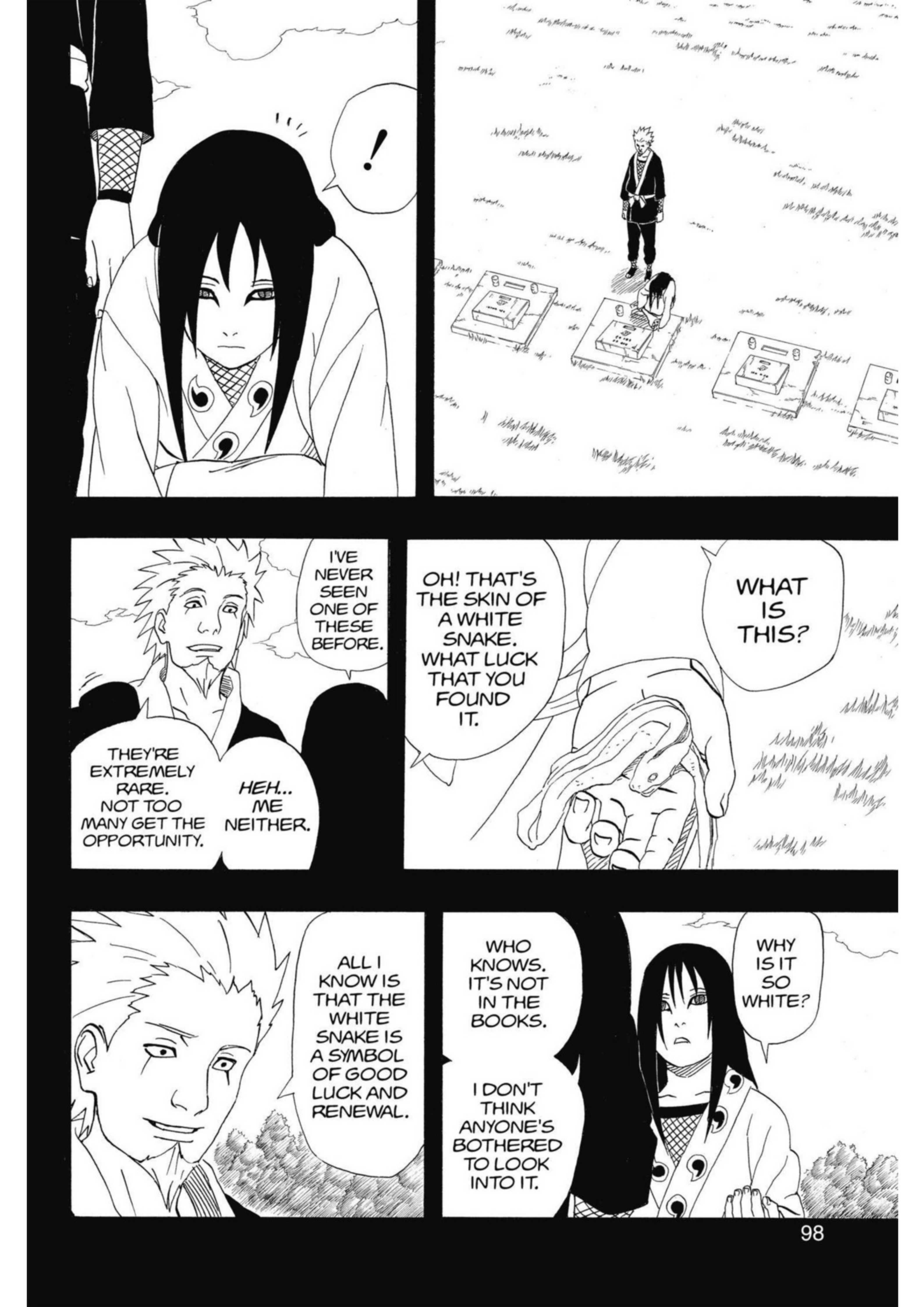

READ THIS WAY


ZWURRRRR
A SNAKE THAT CRAWLED ON THE EARTH DREAMT OF SOARING THROUGH THE SKY...
... KNOWING FULL WELL IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE.


STILL, HOPING BEYOND HOPE, IT KEPT ITS EYE ON A BABY BIRD THAT IT NURTURED IN ITS OWN NEST...
LITTLE REALIZING THAT ACTUALLY ...
SHRRAP

!
SKLORCH
PLAP PLOP
...


READ THIS WAY
...THE SNAKE IS PREY BECAUSE THAT BIRD IS A HAWK...
... READY TO TAKE TO THE SKY!
...
SASUKEEE!!


!
WHAT IS THIS?
OH! THAT'S THE SKIN OF A WHITE SNAKE. WHAT LUCK THAT YOU FOUND IT.
I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE OF THESE BEFORE.
HEH... ME NEITHER.
THEY'RE EXTREMELY RARE. NOT TOO MANY GET THE OPPORTUNITY.
WHY IS IT SO WHITE?
WHO KNOWS. IT'S NOT IN THE BOOKS.
I DON'T THINK ANYONE'S BOTHERED TO LOOK INTO IT.
ALL I KNOW IS THAT THE WHITE SNAKE IS A SYMBOL OF GOOD LUCK AND RENEWAL.


READ THIS WAY


GOOD LUCK AND... RENEWAL ...


...


IT MUST BE KARMA FOR YOU TO FIND IT HERE BY YOUR PARENTS' GRAVESTONE. MAYBE IT MEANS THEY'VE BEEN REBORN SOMEWHERE?
HEY, MAYBE SOMEDAY YOU'LL MEET THEM AGAIN.


WHEN WOULD THAT... BE?

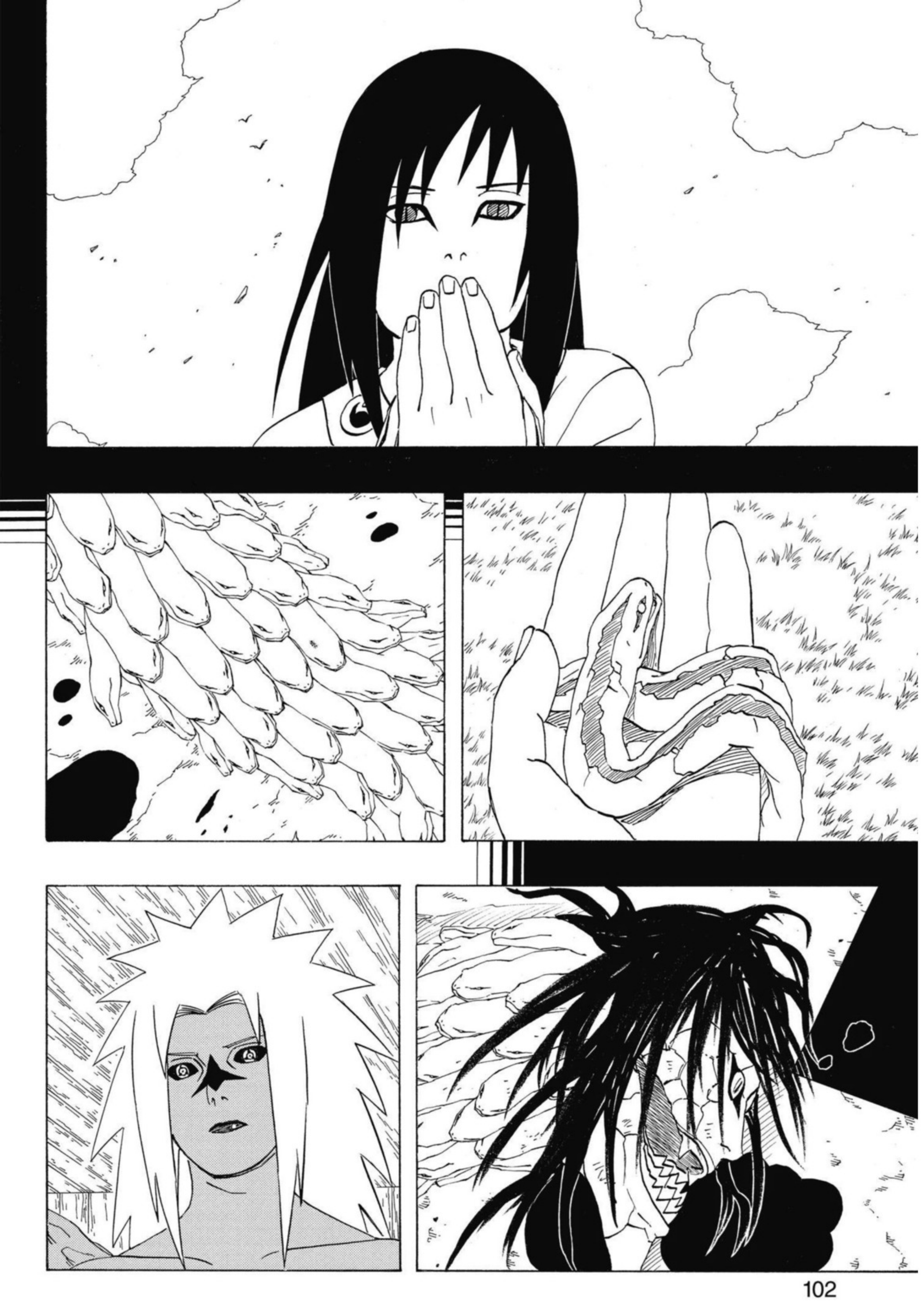

SORRY, GOT NO CLUE FOR YOU THERE.



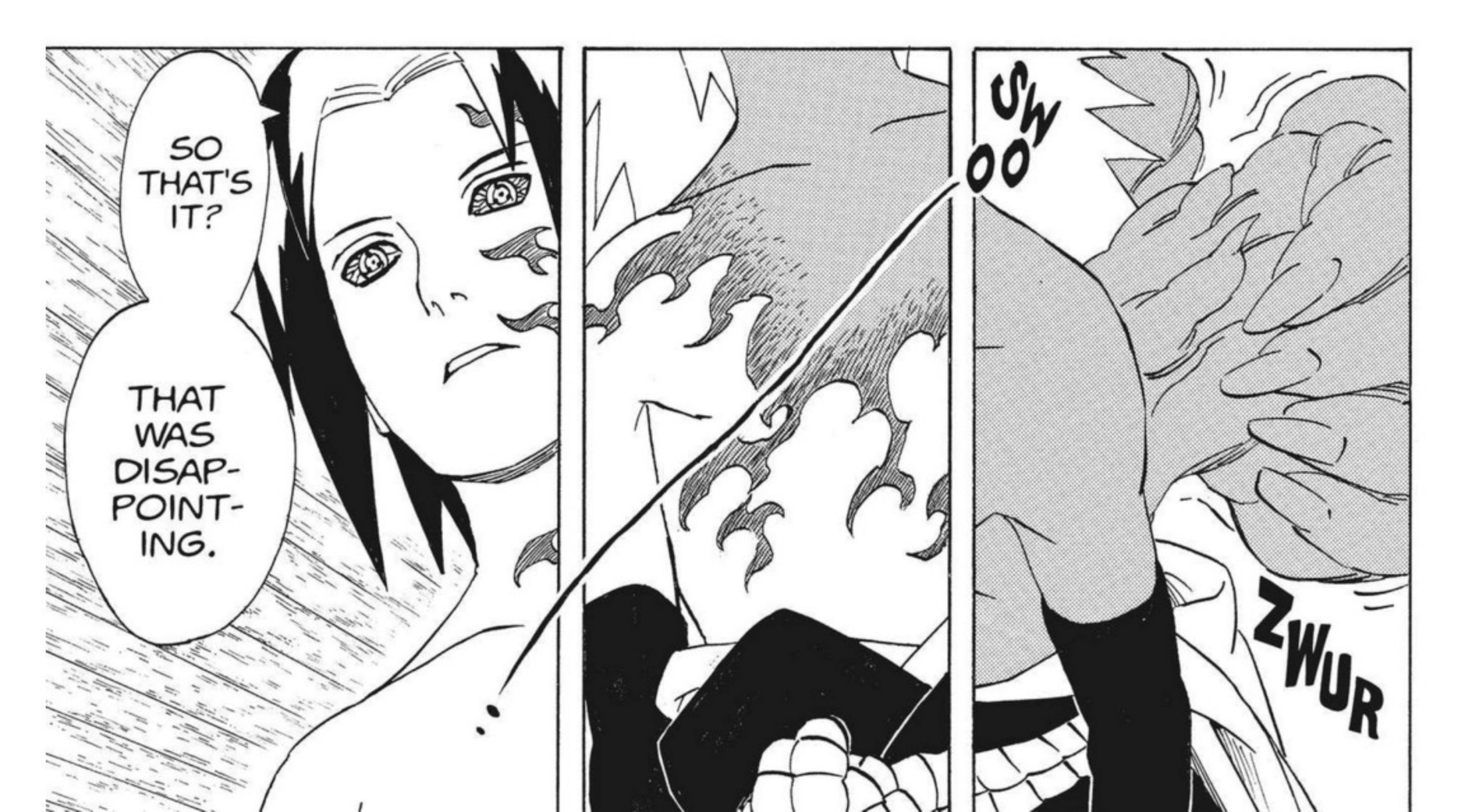

NARUTO

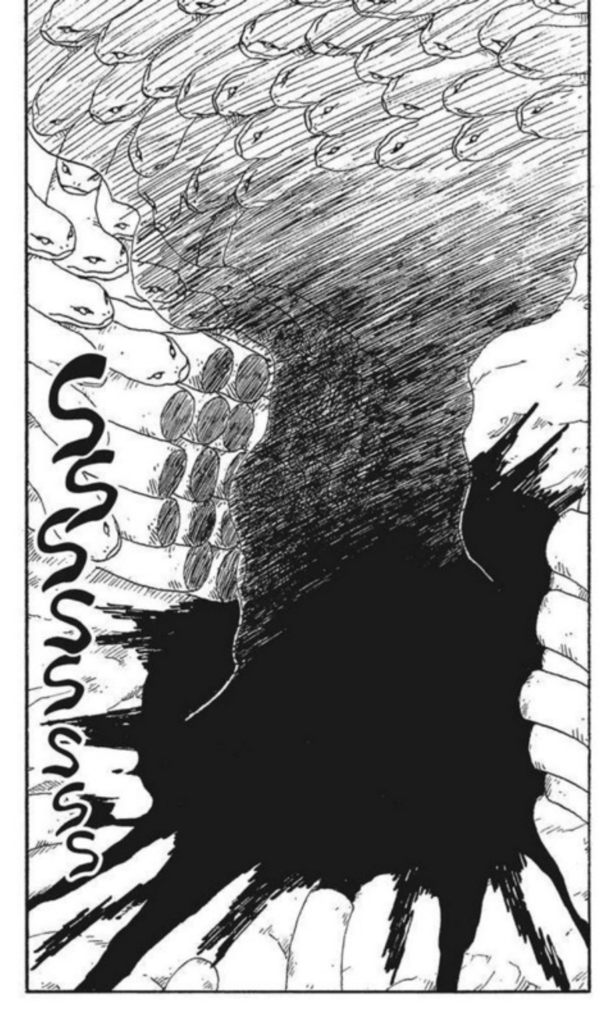
Number 345: The Ritual...!!



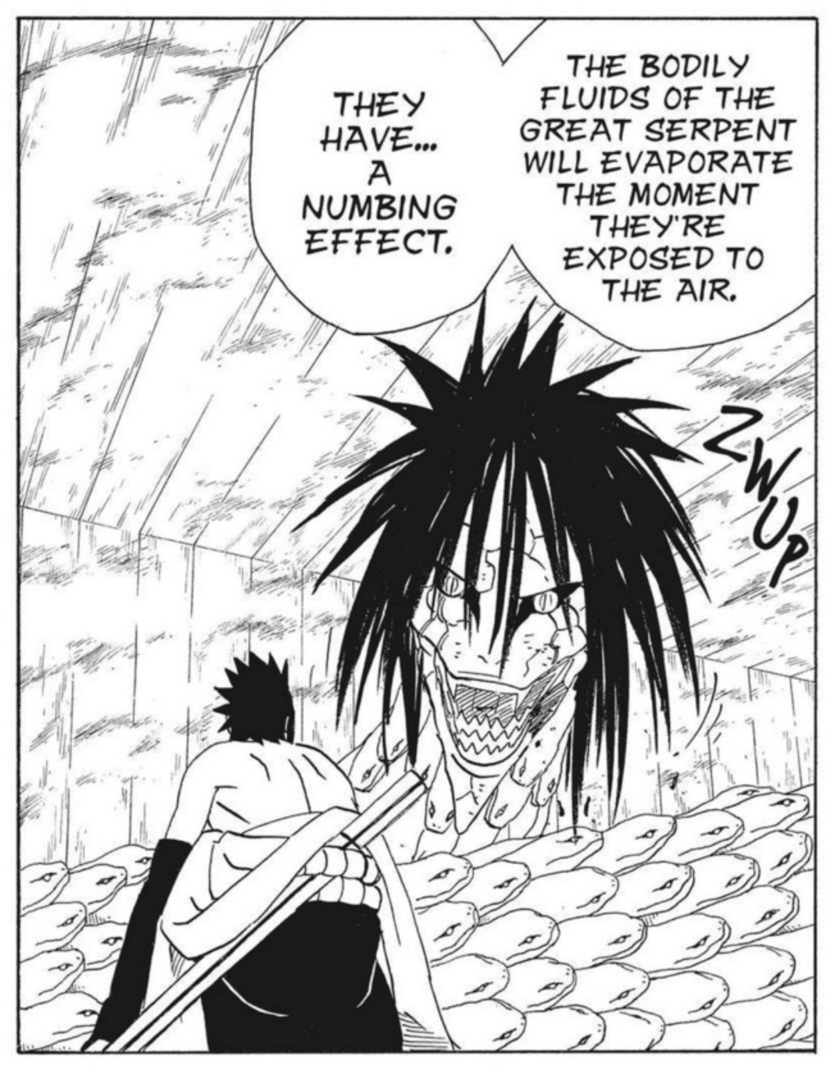



READ THIS WAY


SWOO
ZWUR
...
SO THAT'S IT?
THAT WAS DISAPPOINTING.


SSSSSSSSSS

URK...

?
WOOOP

THE BODILY FLUIDS OF THE GREAT SERPENT WILL EVAPORATE THE MOMENT THEY'RE EXPOSED TO THE AIR.
THEY HAVE... A NUMBING EFFECT.
ZWUP

IT'S ABOUT TIME IT TOOK EFFECT.



I AM IMMORTAL.

YOU CANNOT KILL ME.

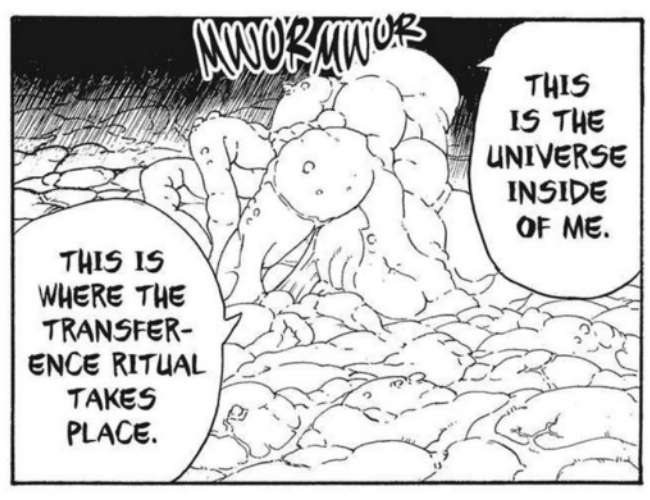
SPONG

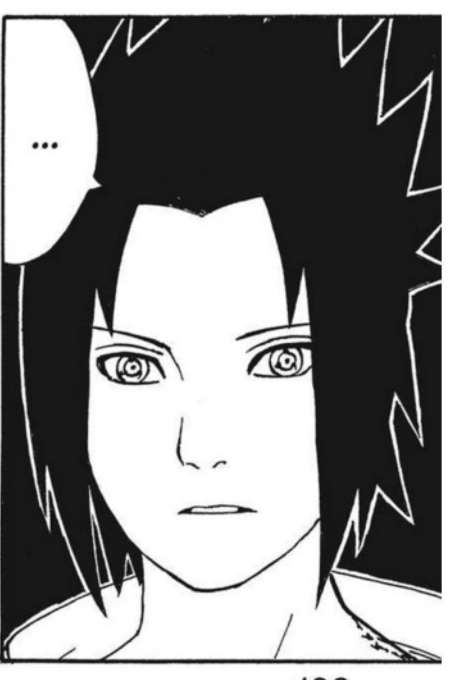
HEH...

NOW... LET ME TAKE YOU...

SHA


WHAT IS...
...THIS PLACE?


MWOR MWOR
THIS IS THE UNIVERSE INSIDE OF ME.
THIS IS WHERE THE TRANSFERENCE RITUAL TAKES PLACE.


...

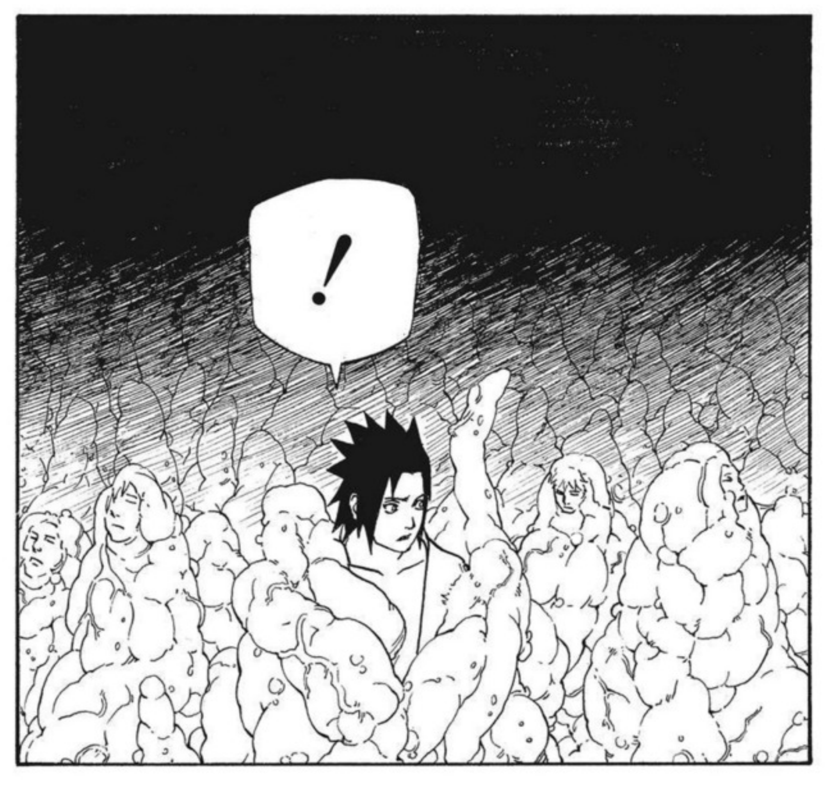

SHALL WE BEGIN?

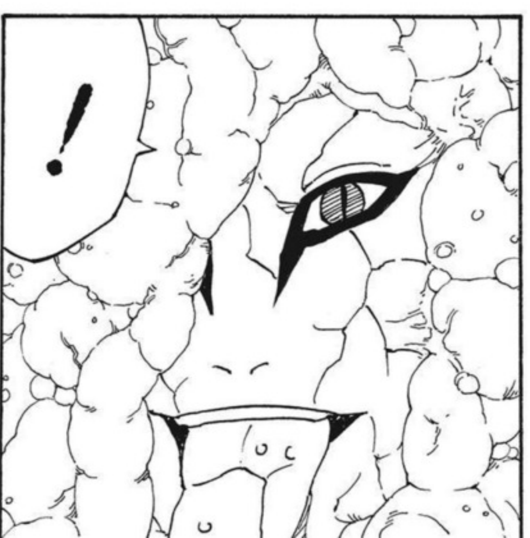

READ
THIS
WAY


!
ZWUP






!


!


ZWURR


HOW CAN THIS BE POSSIBLE...
HOW CAN THE GENJUTSU PARALYSIS BIND ME...
WHAT STRONG EYES YOU HAVE.
MAGNIFICENT.


READ
THIS
WAY


FWAA


TWIK TWIK
SPLOR


FUMP


URK...

OROCHIMARU, MY EYES...

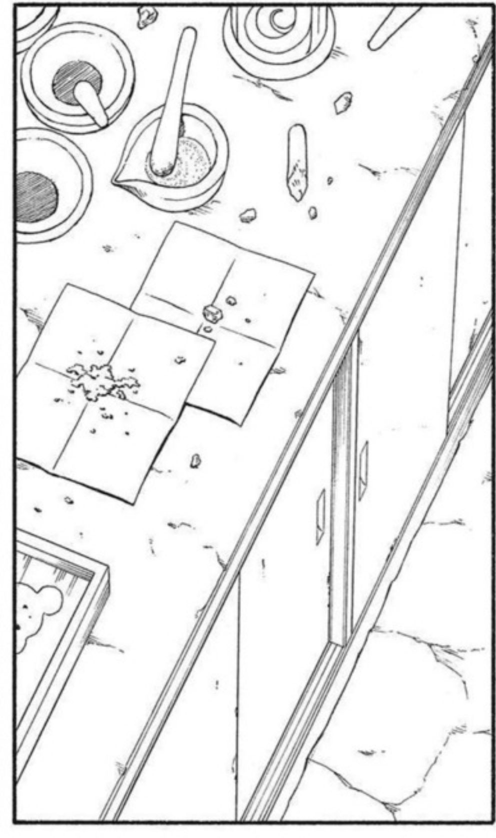
...CAN SEE THROUGH YOUR JUTSU.

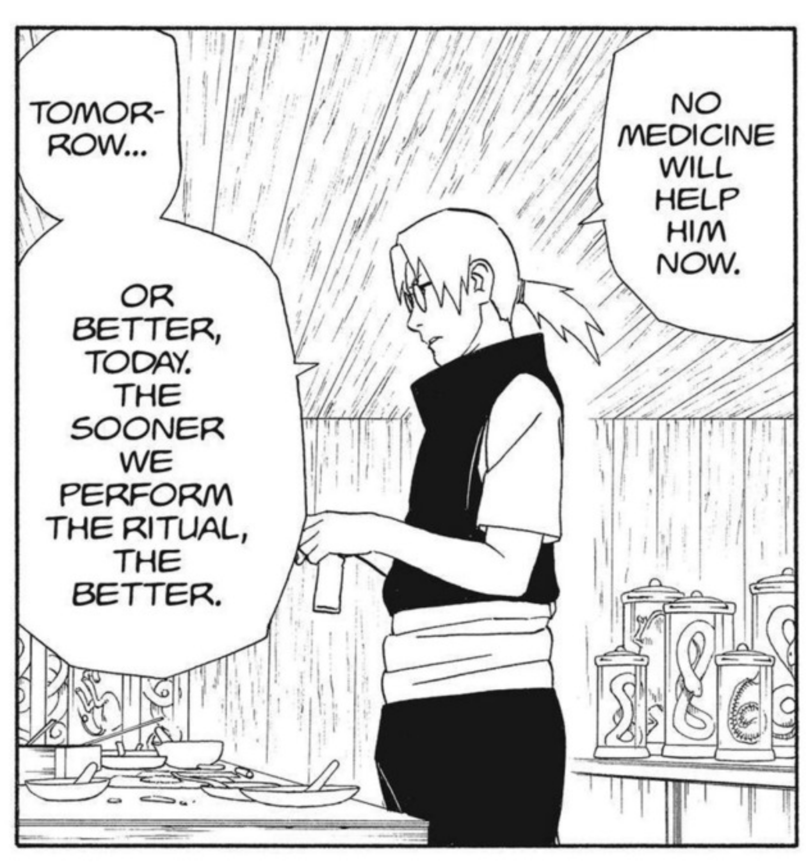
IT'S AS IF I'M LIVING THAT MOMENT ALL OVER...




READ THIS WAY

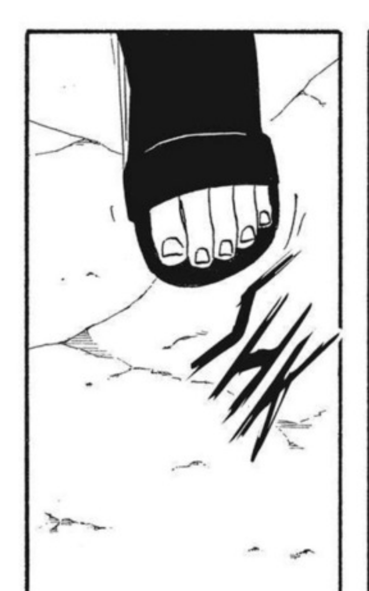





NO MEDICINE WILL HELP HIM NOW.
TOMOR-ROW...
OR BETTER, TODAY. THE SOONER WE PERFORM THE RITUAL, THE BETTER.

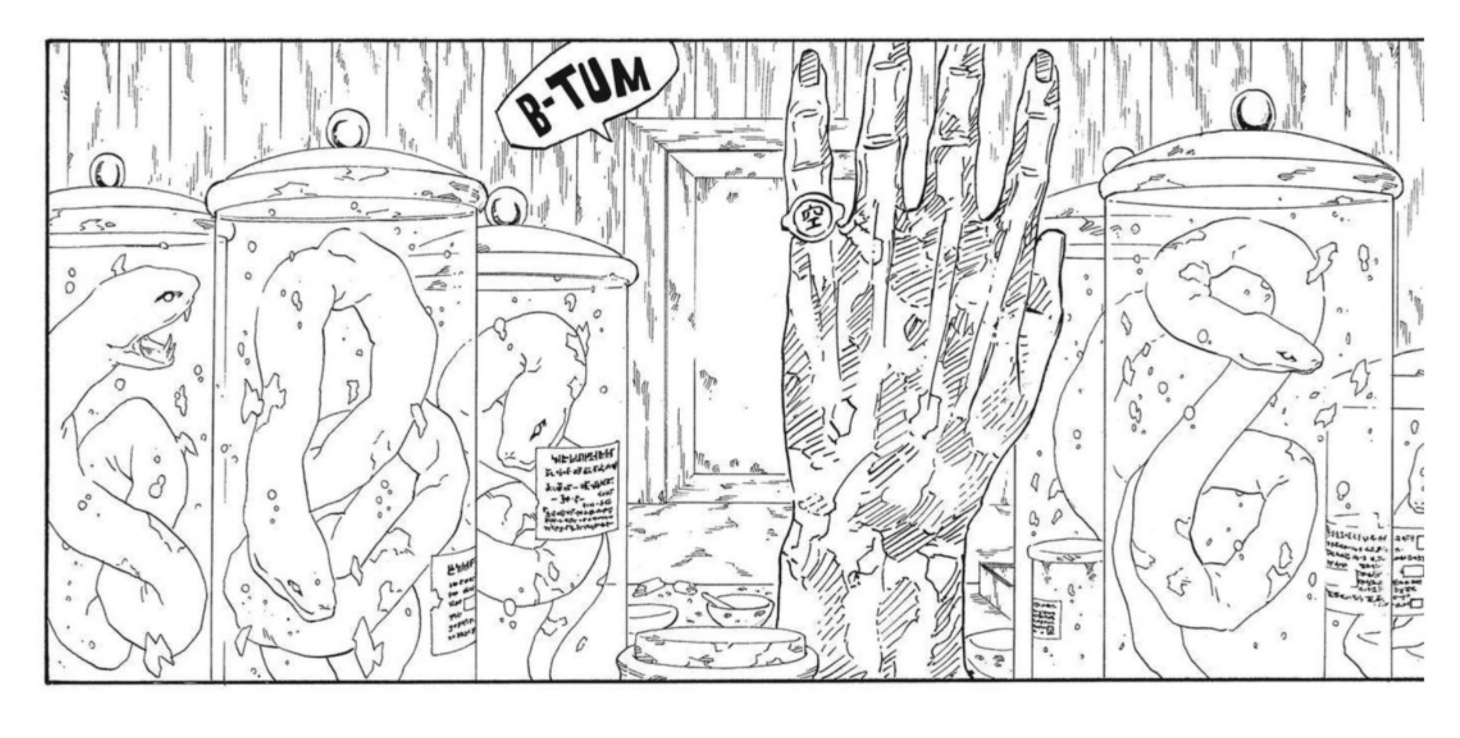

...


I CAN'T IMAGINE SASUKE WILL GO ALONG WITHOUT A FUSS...

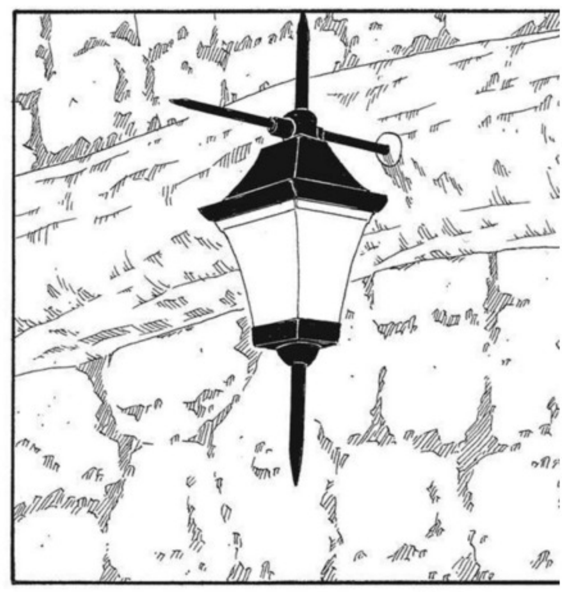

SHK

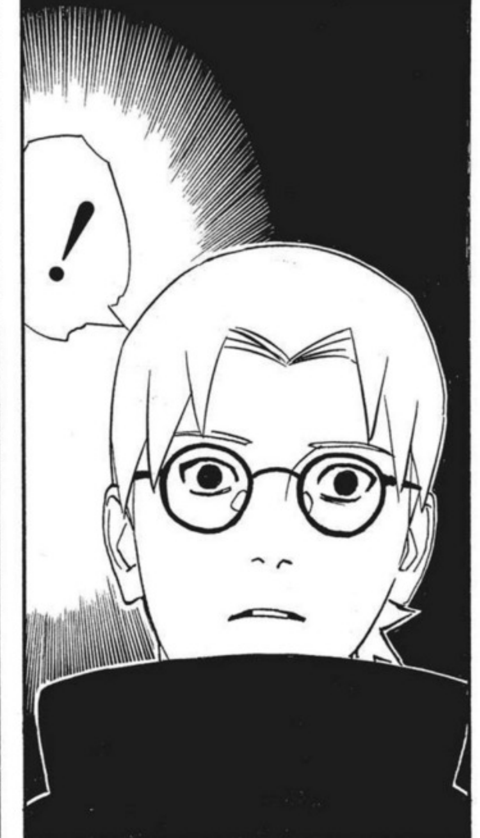

STILL, IT'S NOT LIKE HE COULD DO A THING ABOUT IT. NOT AGAINST THAT RITUAL...
HEH...

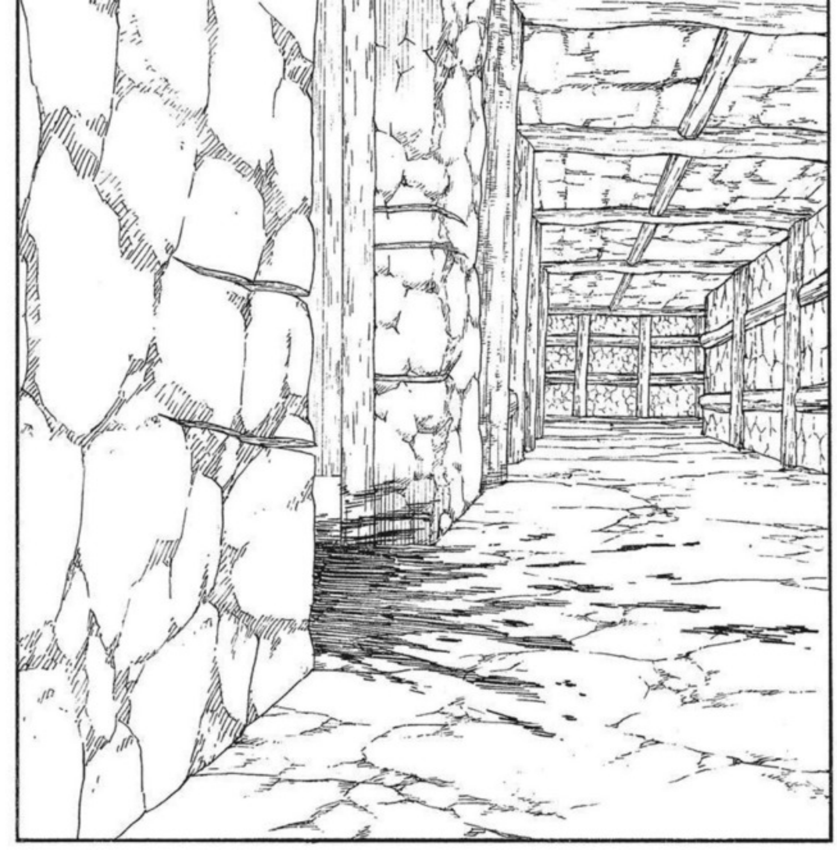

G-CHAK


B-TUM






!



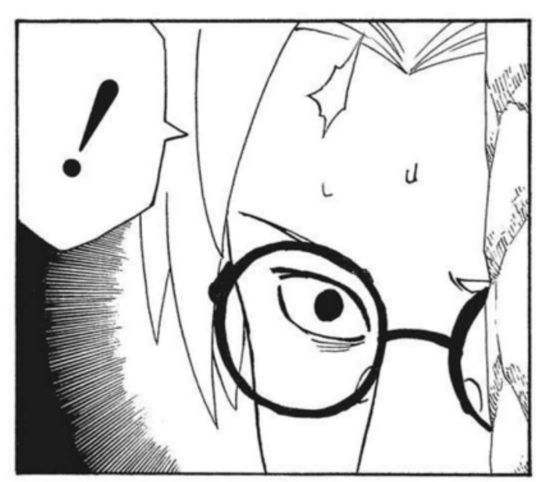

...


ZOOSH

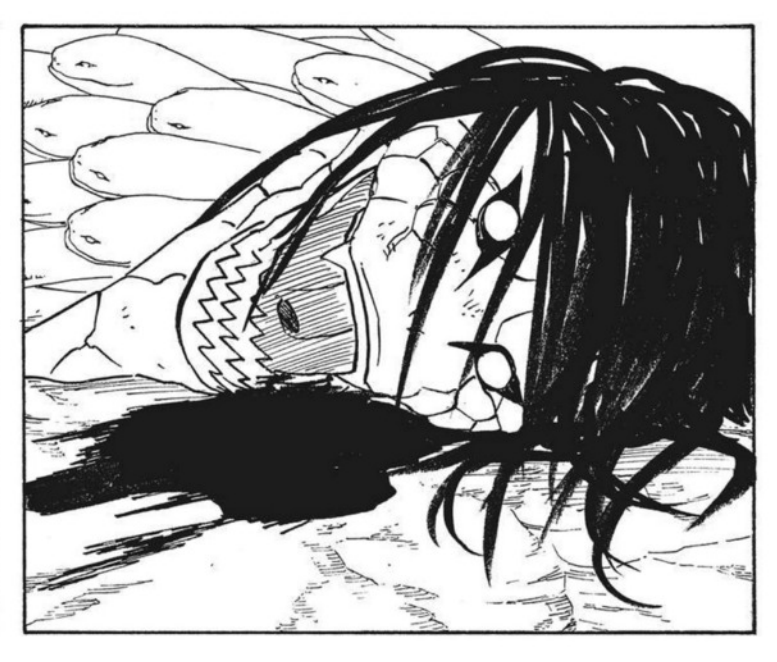

SKF

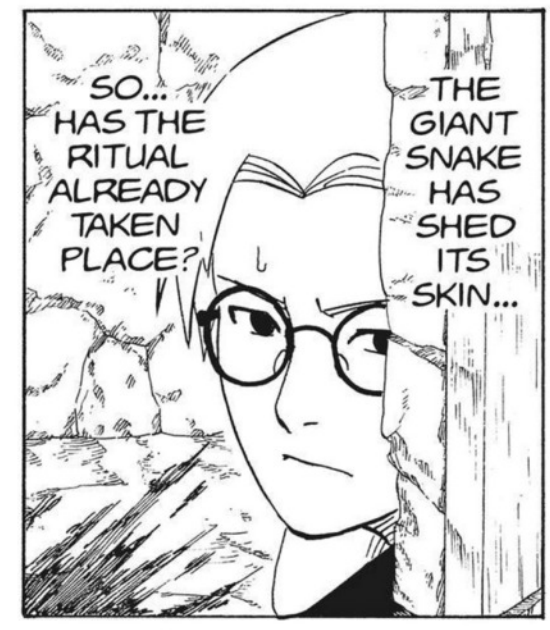

SST


WHY IS HE HERE?!


!


READ
THIS
WAY




THE GIANT SNAKE HAS SHED ITS SKIN...
SO... HAS THE RITUAL ALREADY TAKEN PLACE?


WHAT'S GOING ON?!



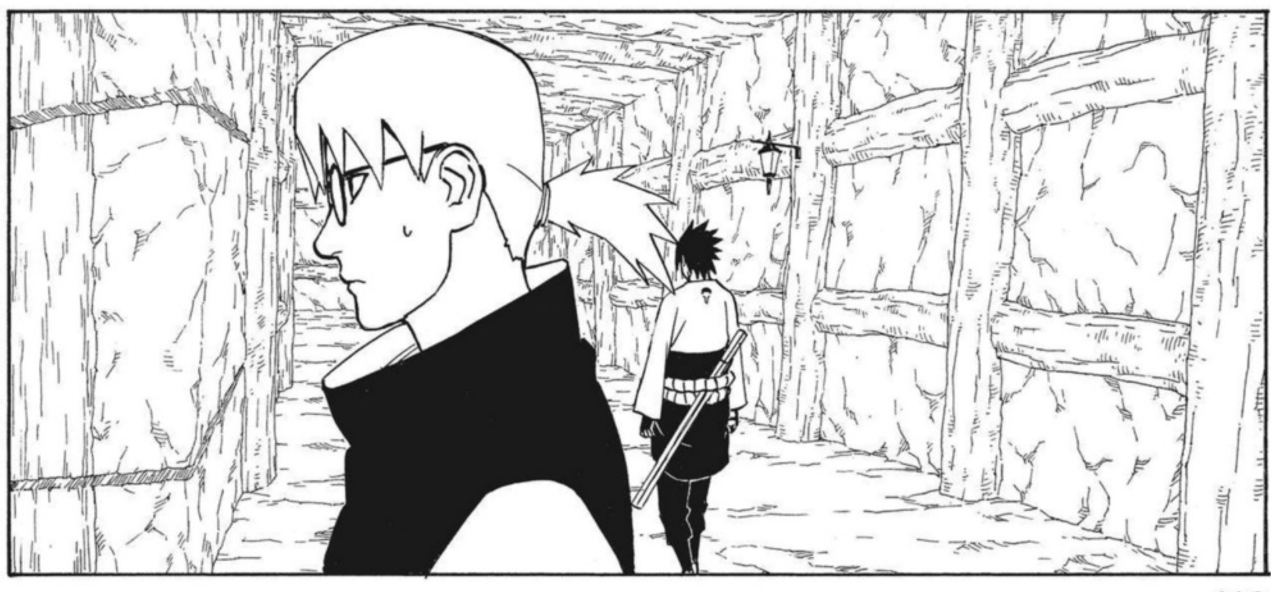

KABUTO?


SHF



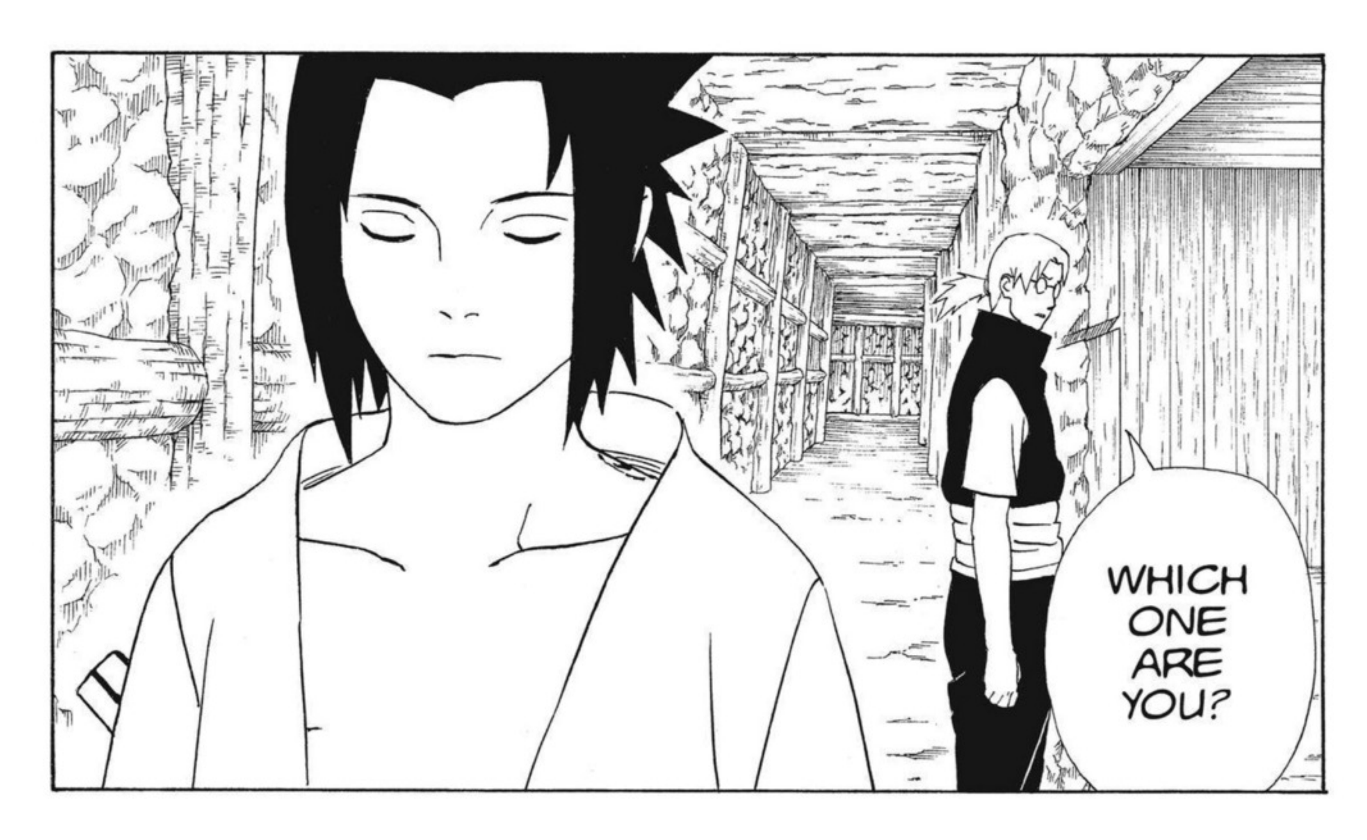
TEP

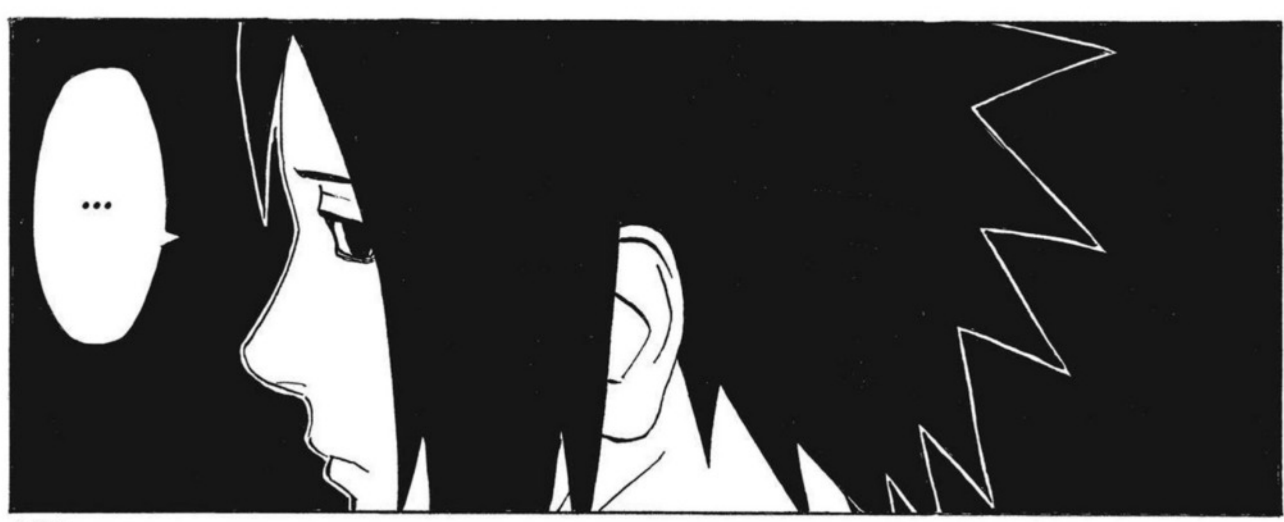
SST




READ
THIS
WAY

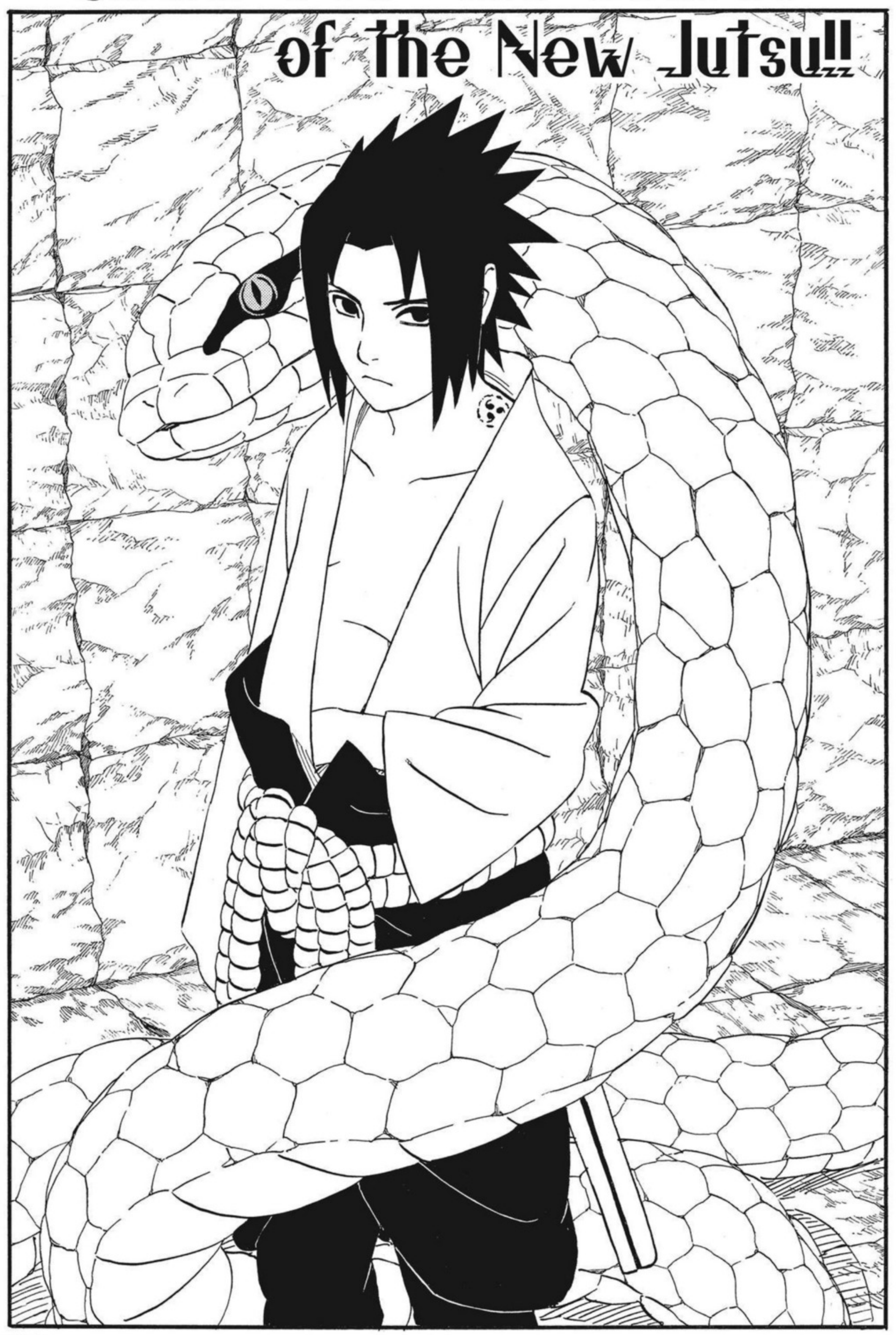

WHICH...


WHICH ONE ARE YOU?

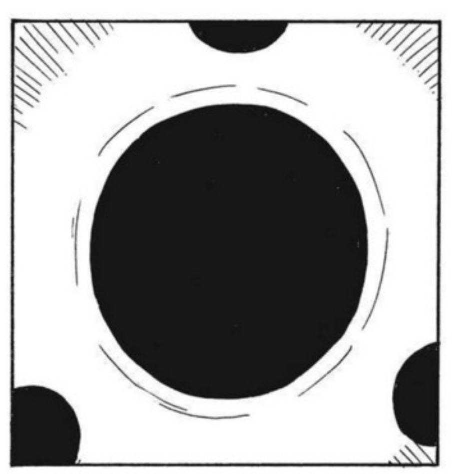
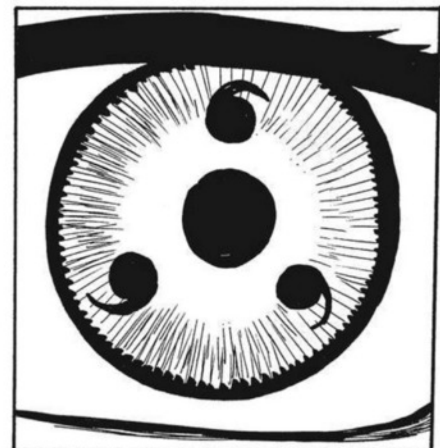
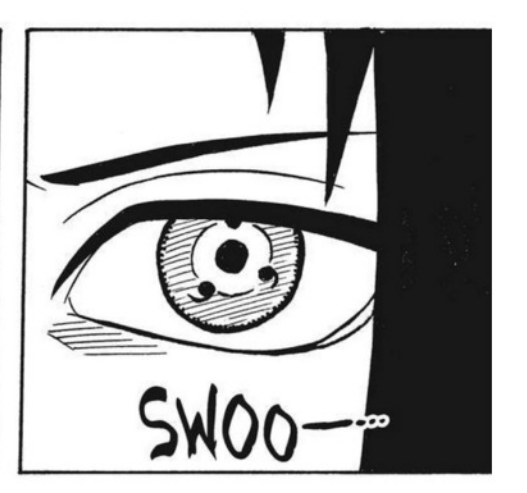
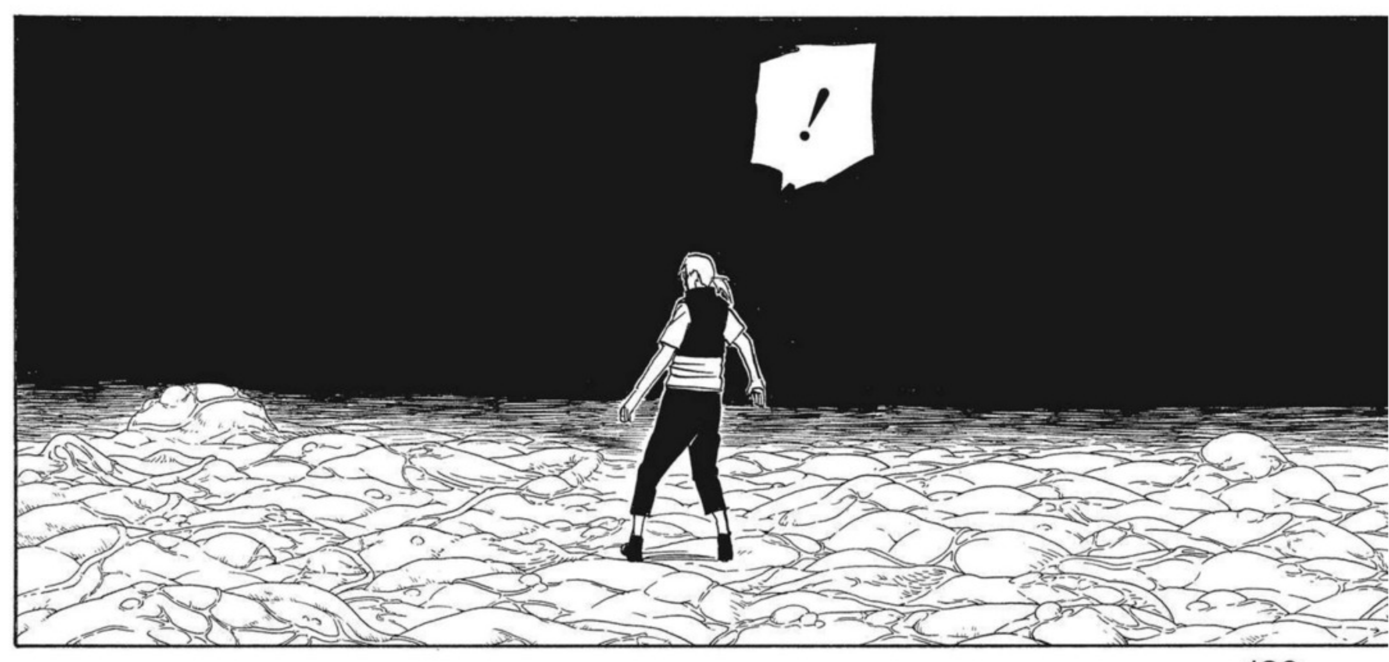

...


NARUTO

Number 346: The Secret of the New Jutsu!!

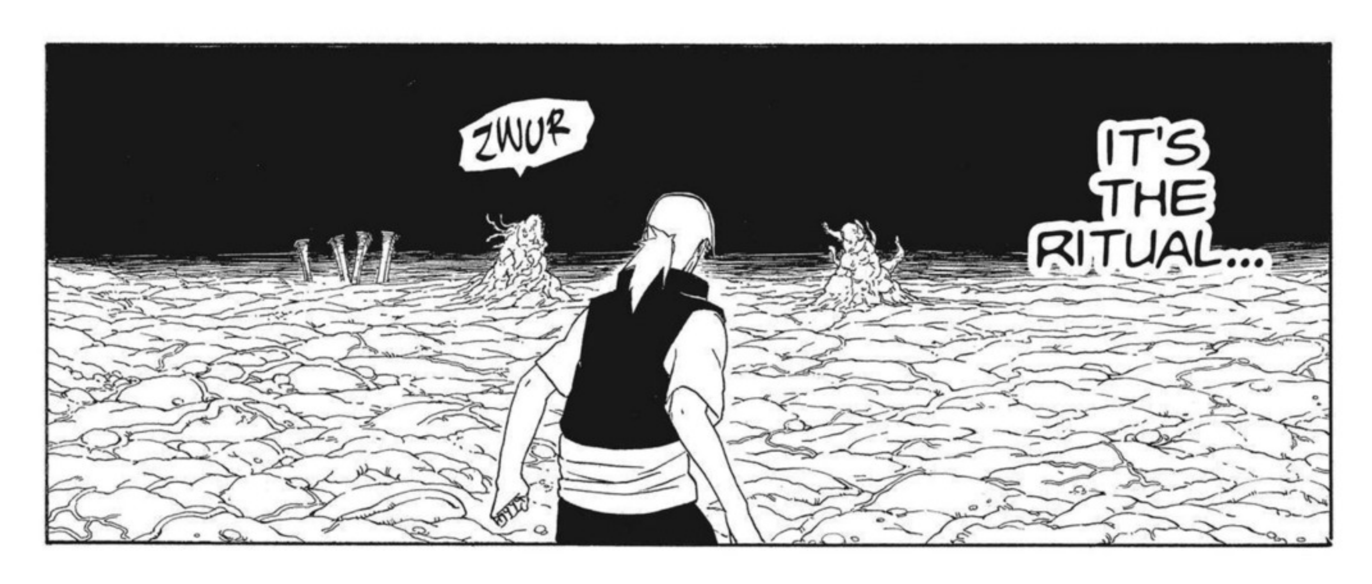


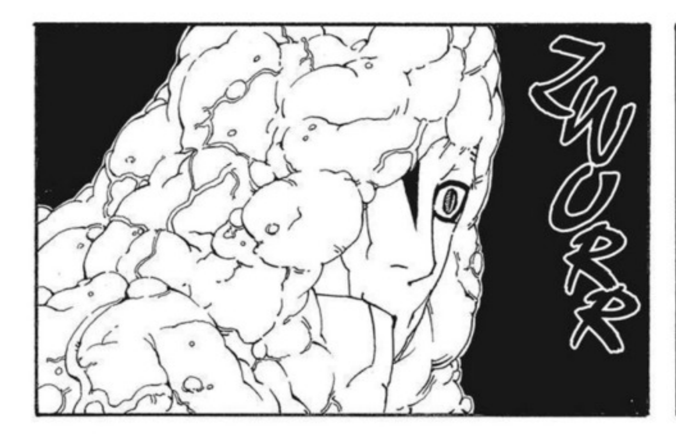


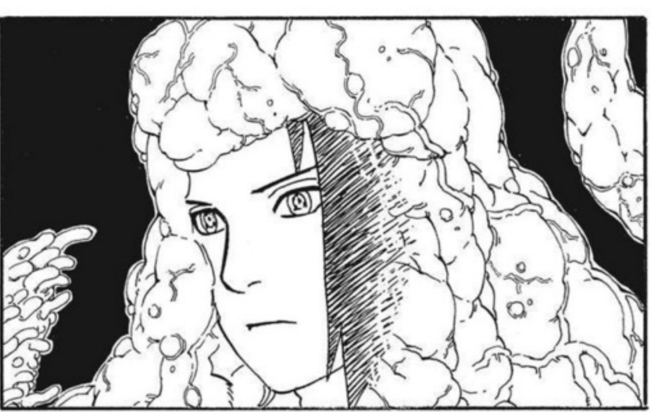
WHICH DO YOU THINK?



SWOO--...

!

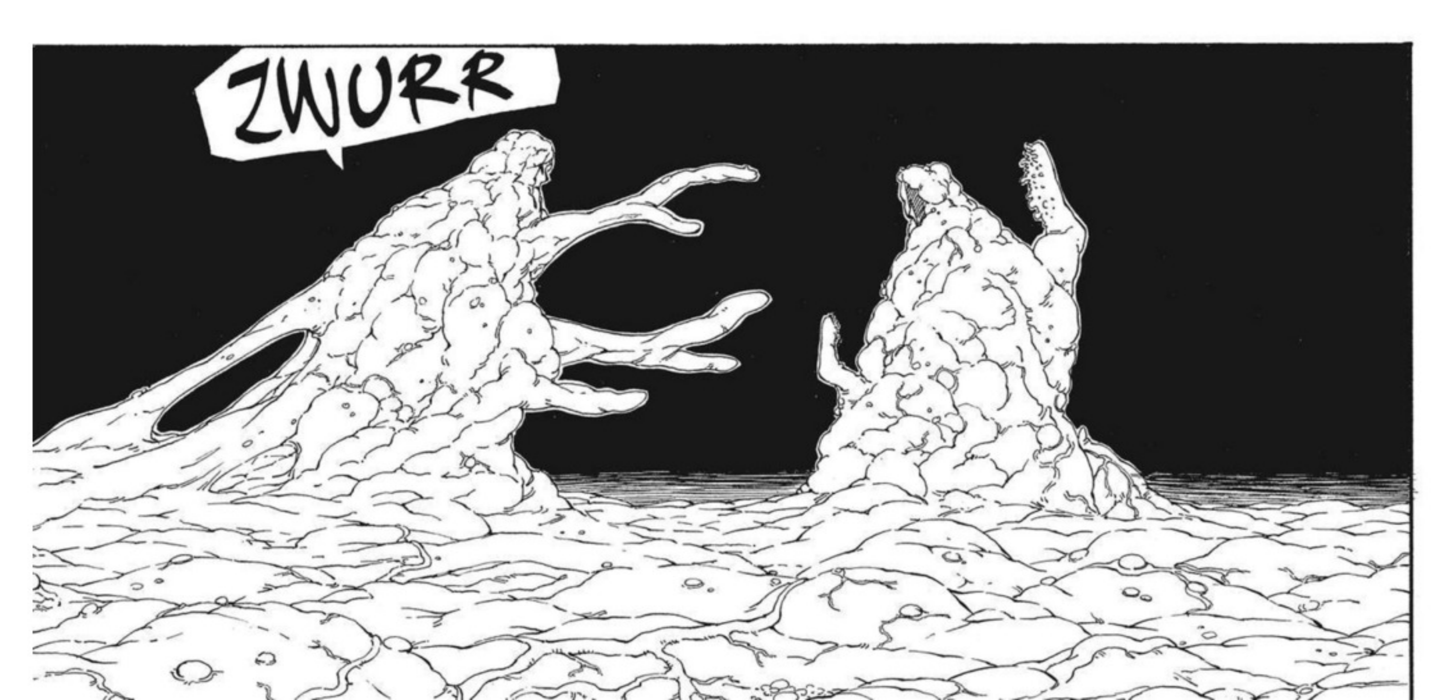


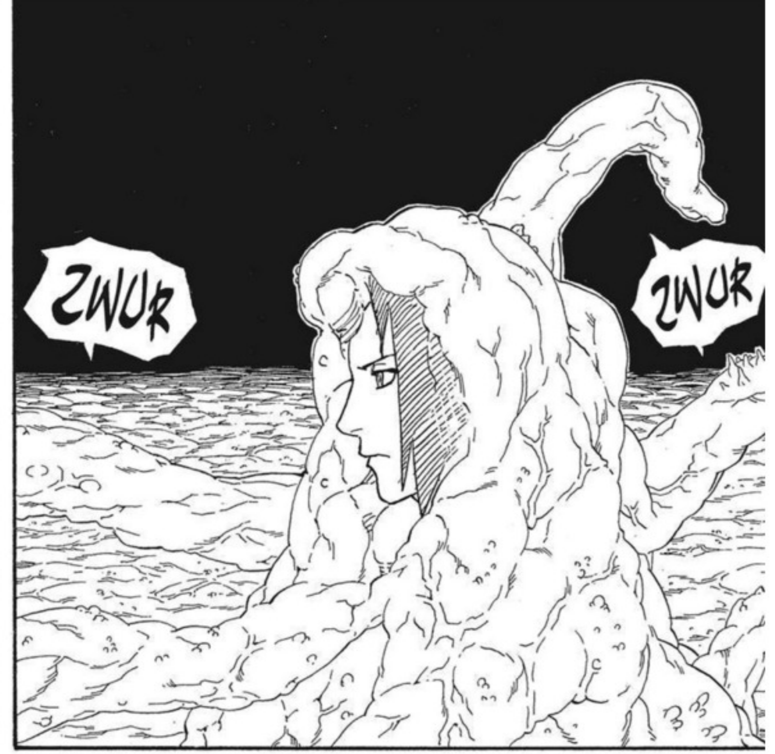
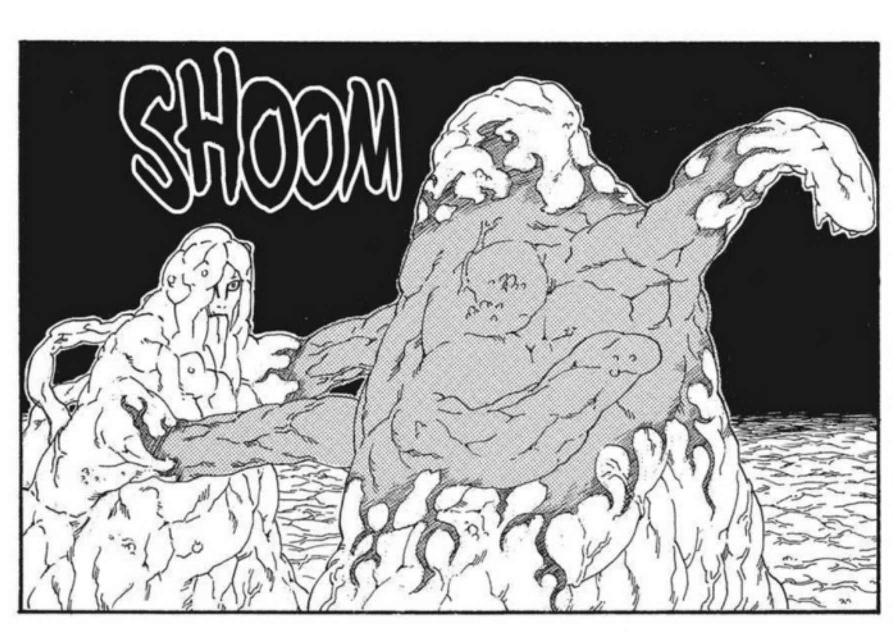

!


ZWUR
IT'S THE RITUAL...


ZWURR




ZWURR


ZWURRR

ZWUR
ZWUR

SHOOM

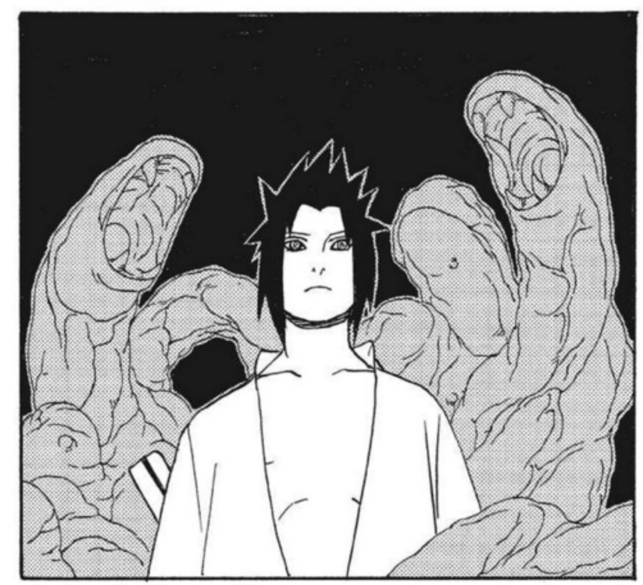
?!

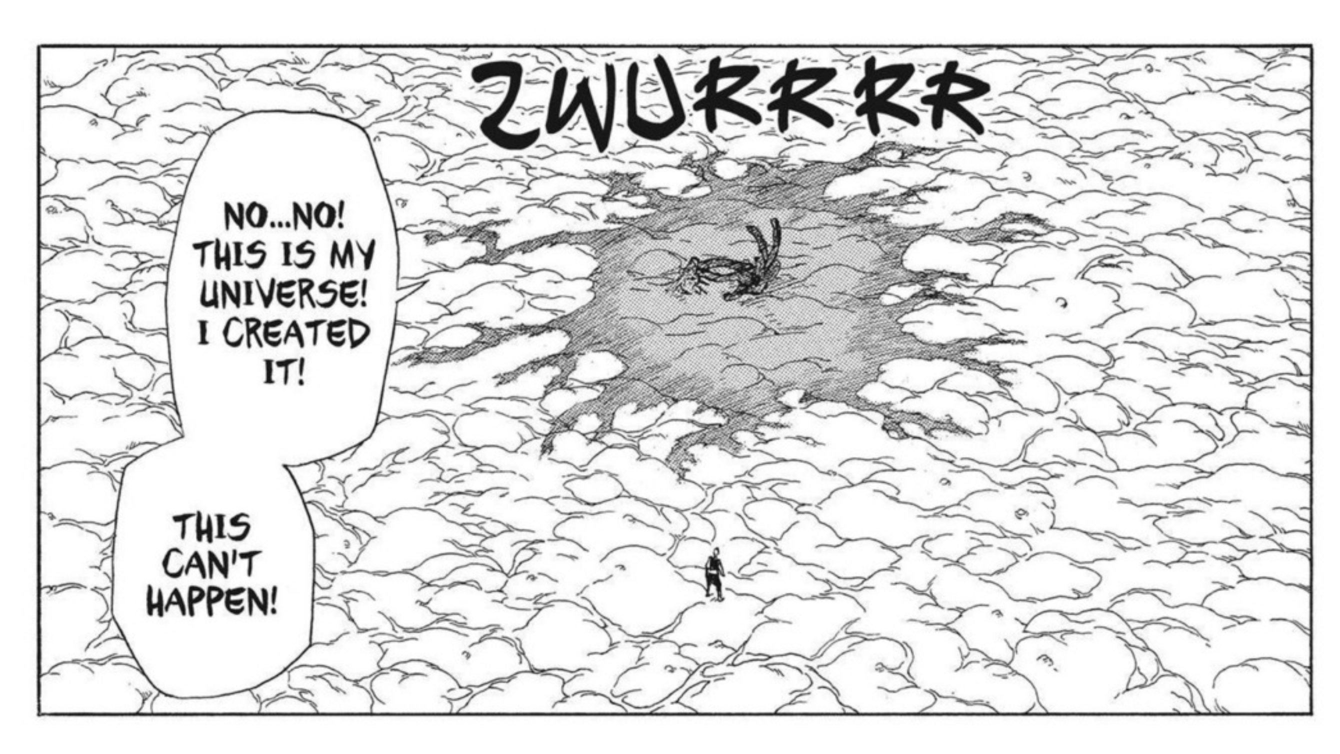
?!

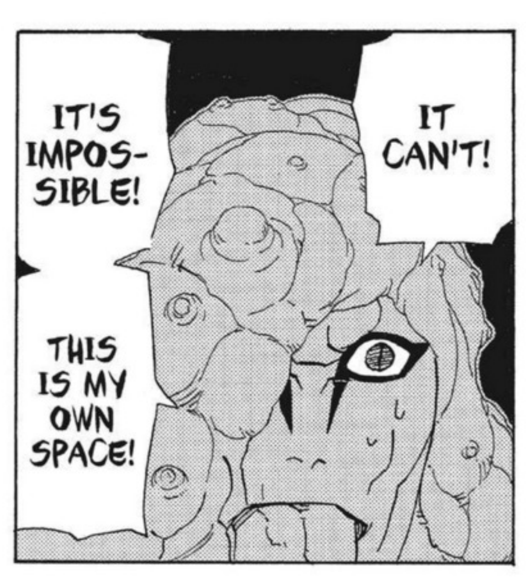
ZWUR
ZWUR
ZWUR


READ THIS WAY

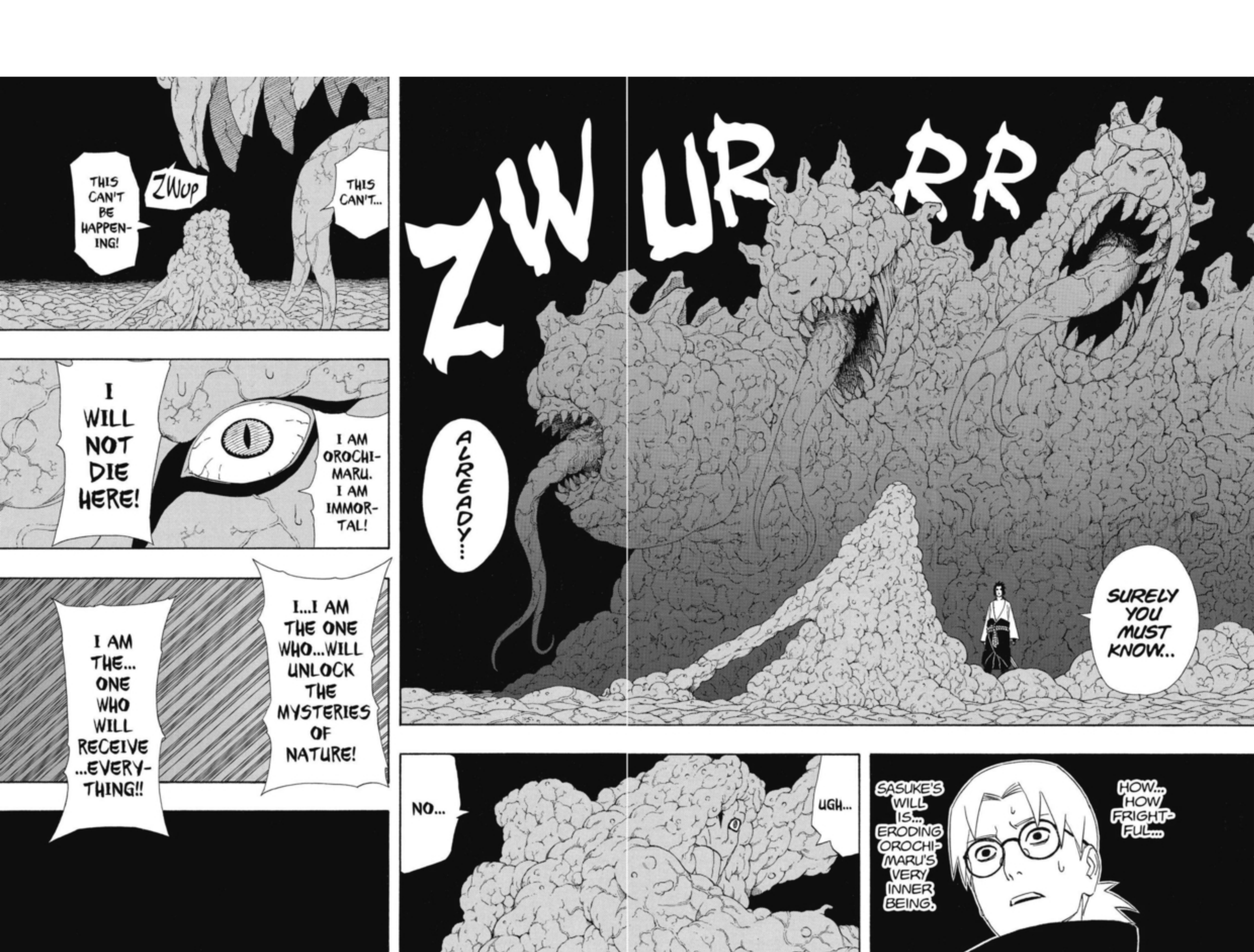

CHOMP
...!
THIS ...
CHOMP

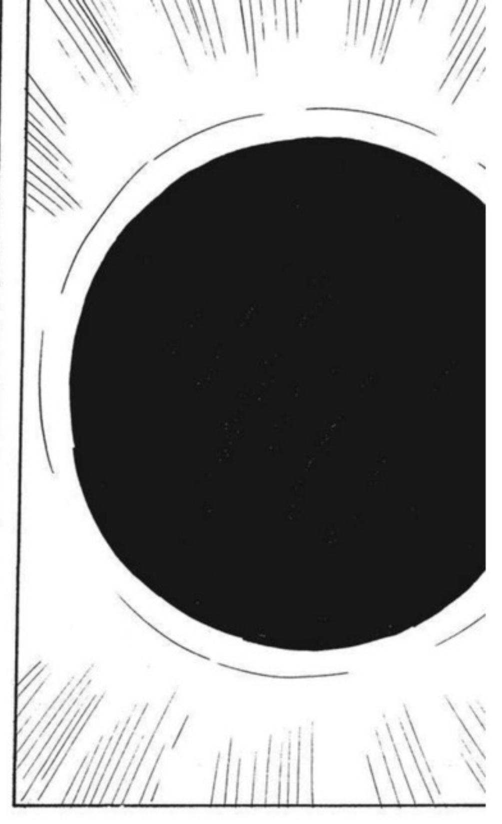


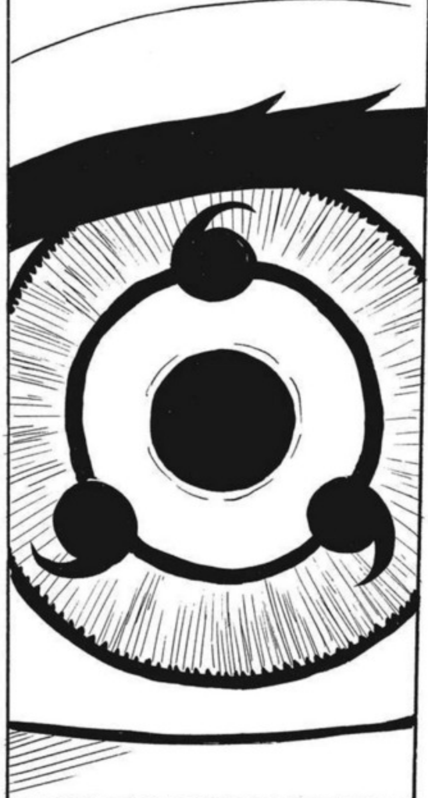

ZWURRRR
NO...NO! THIS IS MY UNIVERSE! I CREATED IT!
THIS CAN'T HAPPEN!

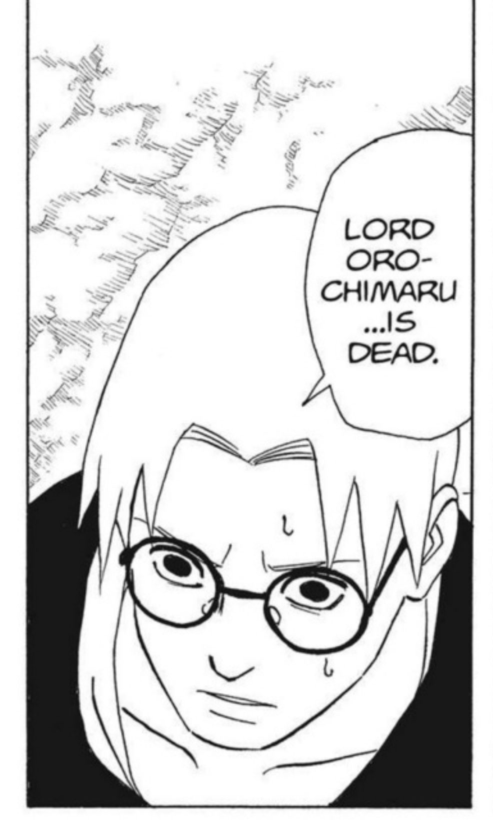

IT CAN'T!
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
THIS IS MY OWN SPACE!

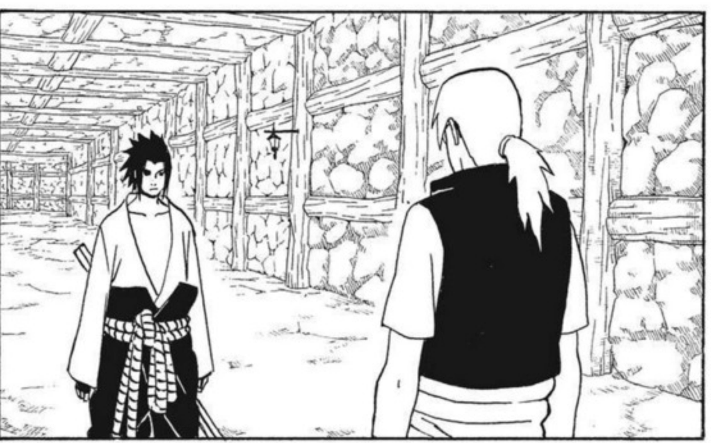

OROCHIMARU, MY EYES CAN SEE THROUGH ALL YOUR JUTSU.


ZWURRR
SURELY YOU MUST KNOW...
ALREADY...
HOW... HOW FRIGHTFUL...
SASUKE'S WILL IS... ERODING OROCHIMARU'S VERY INNER BEING.
UGH...
NO...
THIS CAN'T...
ZWUP
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!
I AM OROCHIMARU. I AM IMMORTAL!
I WILL NOT DIE HERE!
I...I AM THE ONE WHO...WILL UNLOCK THE MYSTERIES OF NATURE!
I AM THE... ONE WHO WILL RECEIVE ...EVERYTHING!!





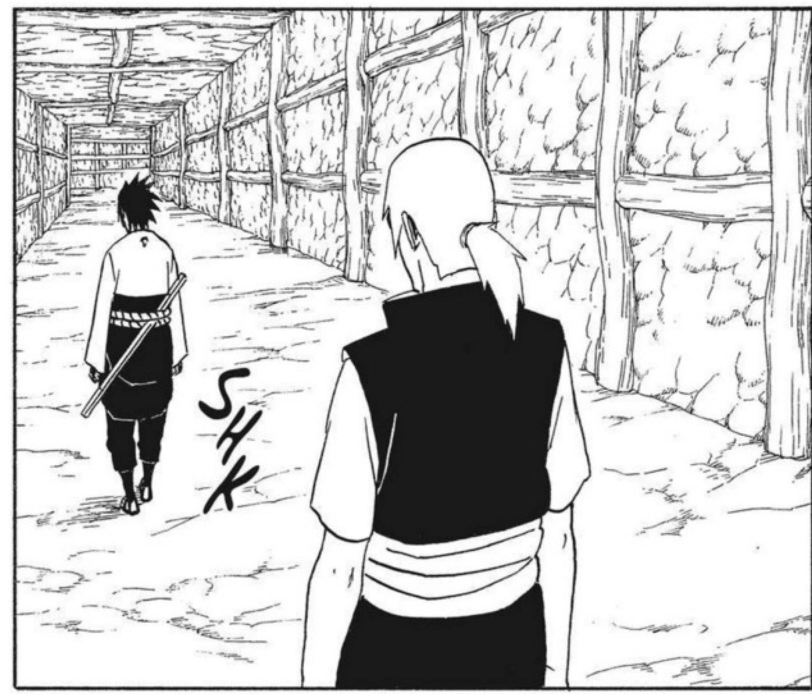


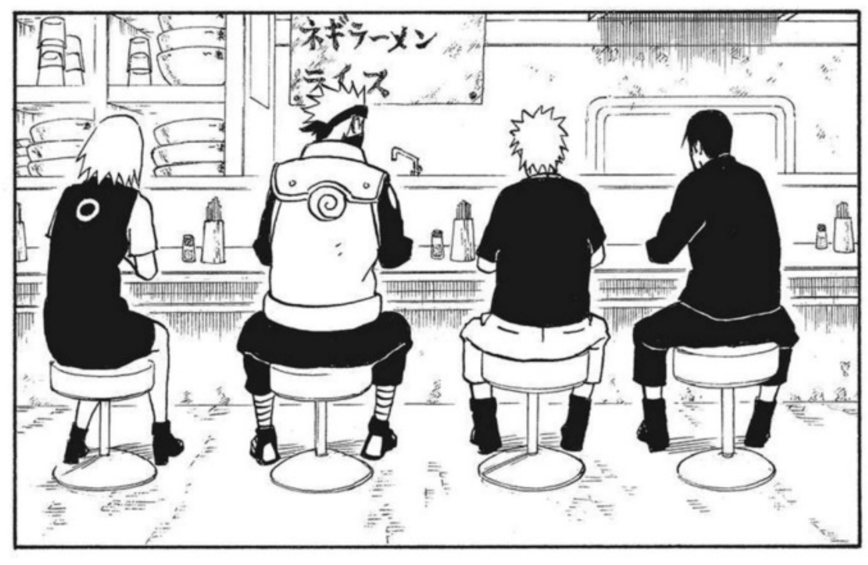


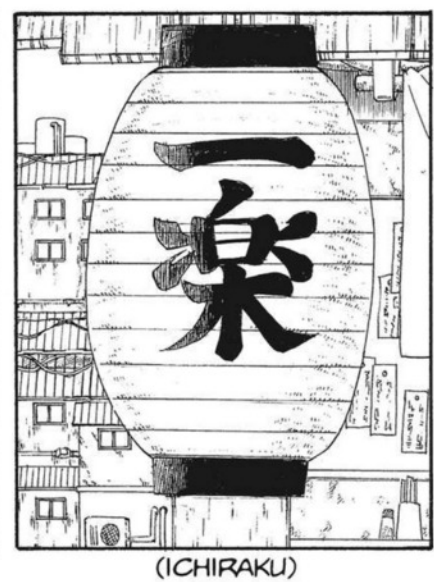


I ABSORBED HIM. THAT'S ALL.





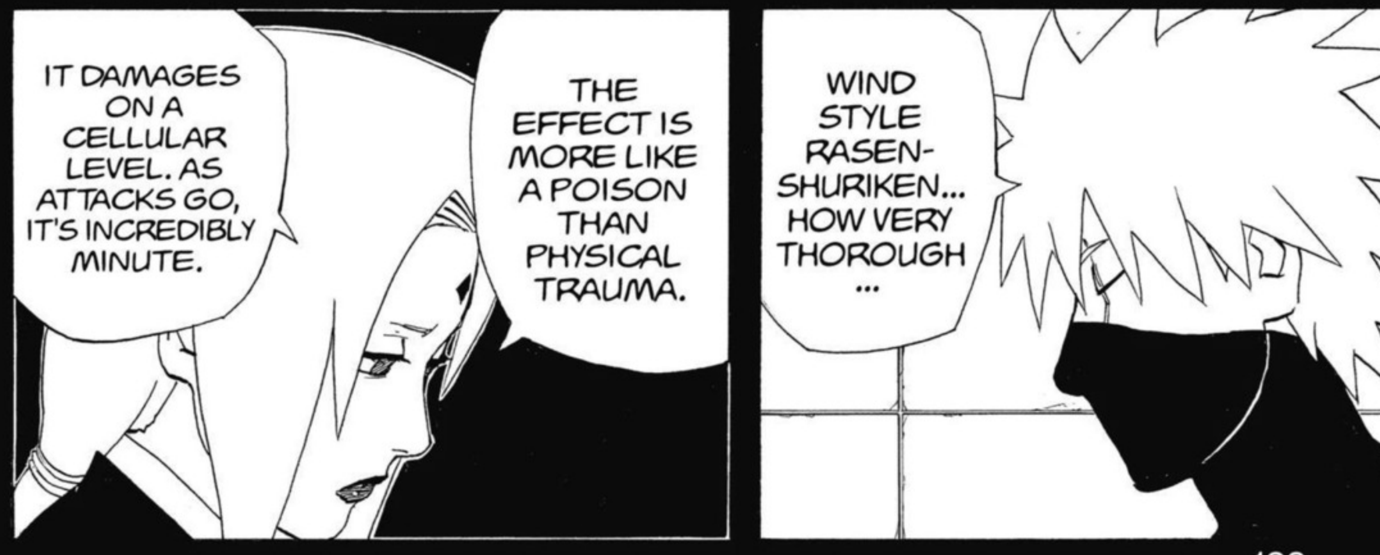



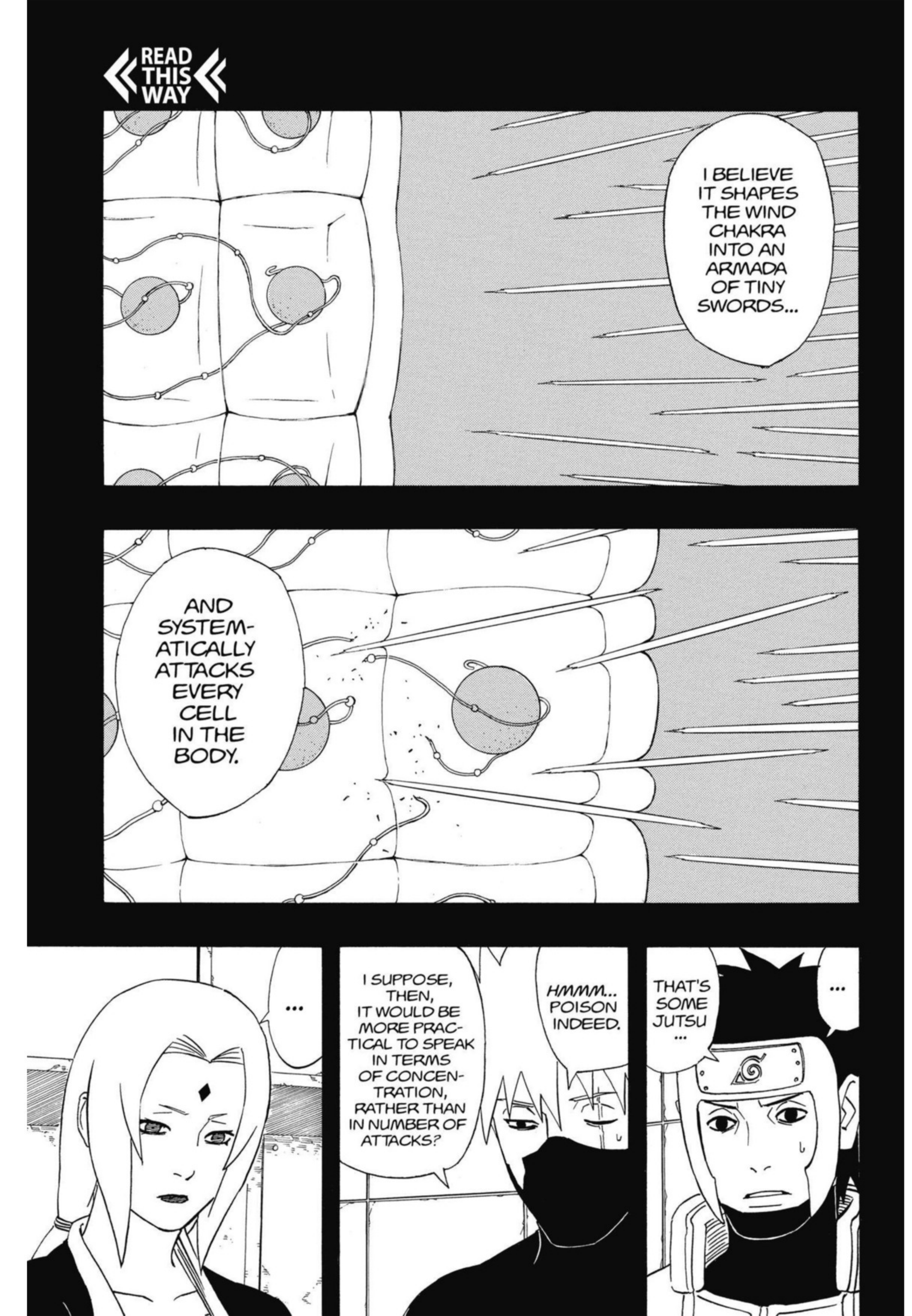


(ICHIRAKU)



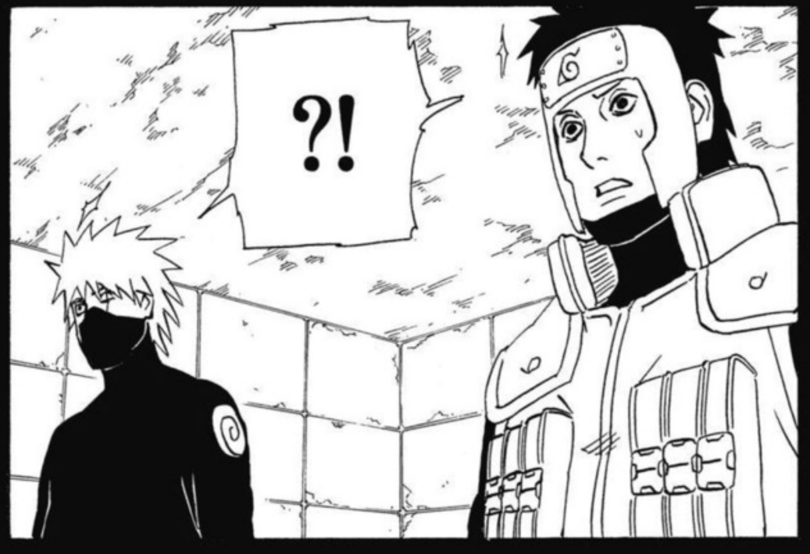

HIS CHAKRA NETWORK HAS BEEN COMPLETELY SEVERED.
IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE. BUT IT IS SO.


WIND STYLE RASEN-SHURIKEN... HOW VERY THOROUGH ...
THE EFFECT IS MORE LIKE A POISON THAN PHYSICAL TRAUMA.
IT DAMAGES ON A CELLULAR LEVEL. AS ATTACKS GO, IT'S INCREDIBLY MINUTE.

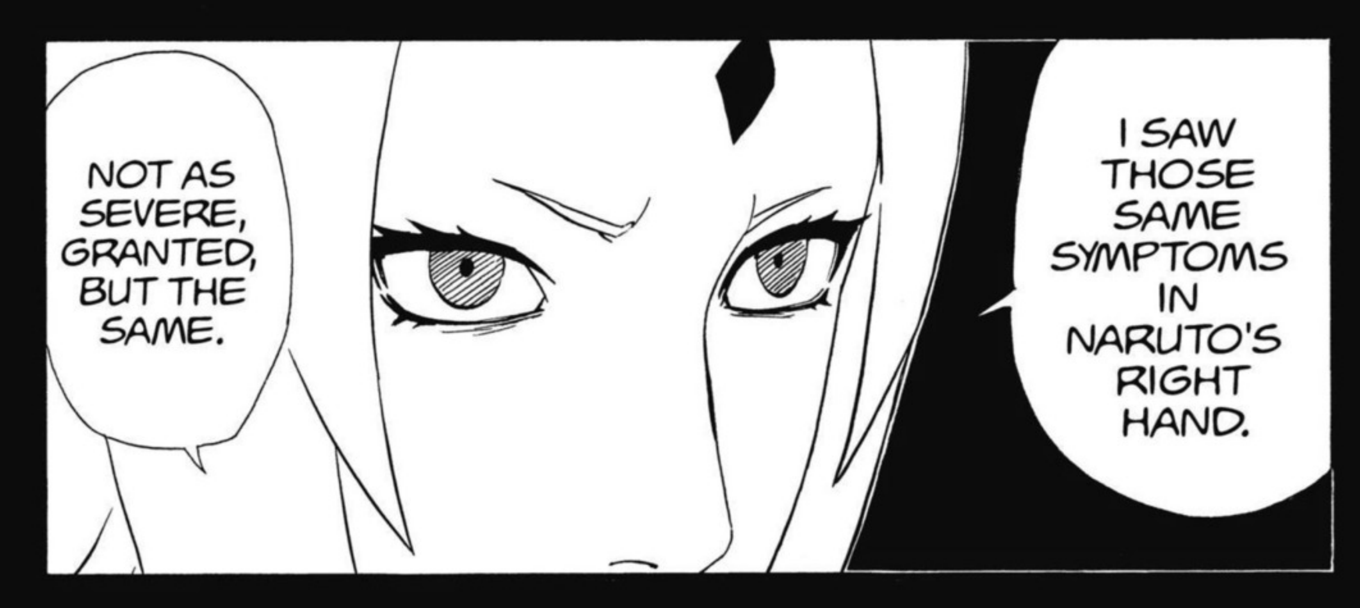

READ THIS WAY
I BELIEVE IT SHAPES THE WIND CHAKRA INTO AN ARMADA OF TINY SWORDS...
AND SYSTEM-ATICALLY ATTACKS EVERY CELL IN THE BODY.
...
THAT'S SOME JUTSU ...
HMMM... POISON INDEED.
I SUPPOSE, THEN, IT WOULD BE MORE PRAC-TICAL TO SPEAK IN TERMS OF CONCEN-TRATION, RATHER THAN IN NUMBER OF ATTACKS?
...


SO... HOW'S NARUTO?
賭
WELL ...
THERE'S OUR REAL PROB-LEM.
FIGURED AS MUCH...
...
...
KAKASHI ...
DON'T ALLOW NARUTO TO USE RASEN-SHURIKEN. EVER AGAIN.


READ
THIS
WAY


?!

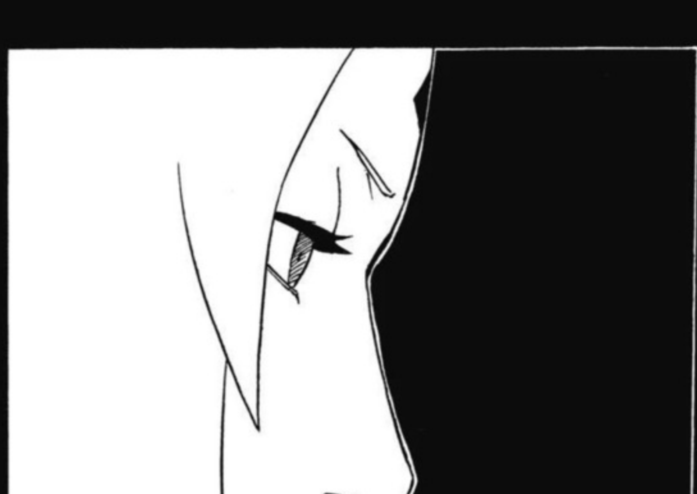

THAT BAD, HUH.


I SAW THOSE SAME SYMPTOMS IN NARUTO'S RIGHT HAND.
NOT AS SEVERE, GRANTED, BUT THE SAME.




IF NARUTO CONTINUES TO USE THE JUTSU, THEN BEFORE LONG...
HE'LL ALTO-GETHER LOSE HIS ABILITY TO WIELD CHAKRA...


IT IS A POWERFUL JUTSU...
IT COMES WITH A RISK...




ONCE A CELL OF THE BODY IS CUT OFF FROM ITS KEIRAKUKEI, IT'S BEYOND MY ABILITY TO HEAL IT. EVEN WITH MY MEDICAL NINJUTSU...
BE SURE THAT NARUTO UNDER-STANDS THIS IMPLICITLY.


...






NARUTO ...ABOUT THAT NEW JUTSU...


MASTER ...


!


READ THIS WAY


I KNOW HOW I FEEL...
...WAY BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE DOES!

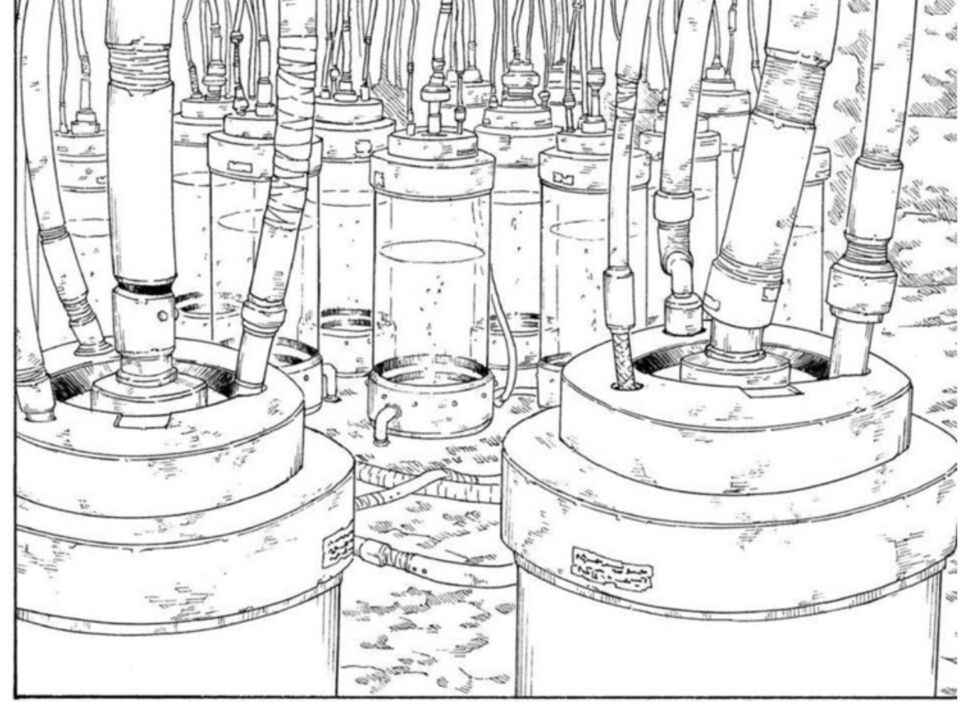

REMEMBER, I'M GONNA BE HOKAGE!
THAT'S HOW INCREDIBLE I AM! SO DON'T WORRY!

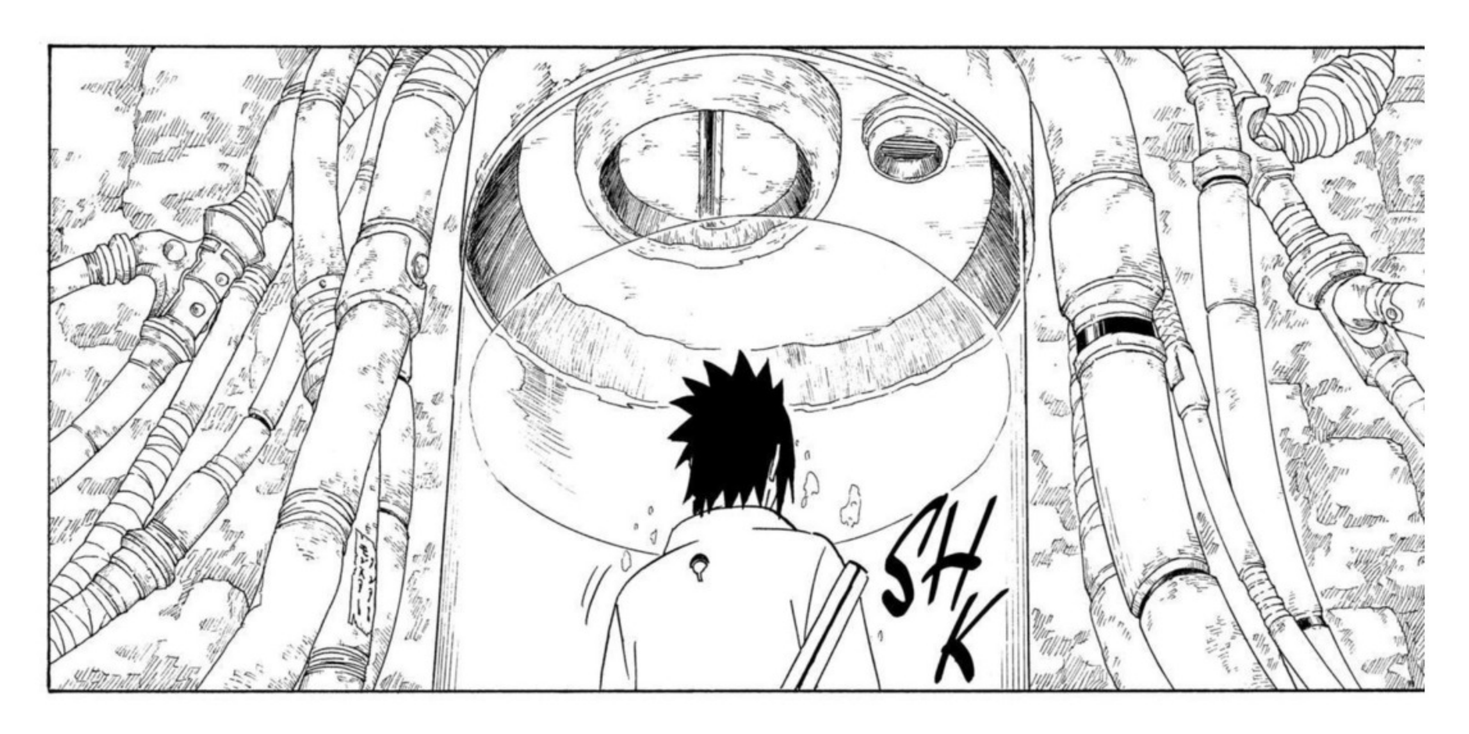

HRRM ...


...


...


THANKS FOR THE FOOD!
IT'S ON MASTER KAKASHI'S TAB!



PLISH

SHK

I KNEW YOU'D SHOW UP.
I TAKE IT, THEN, YOU'VE KILLED OROCHIMARU.

YEAH ...
HERE, LET'S GET YOU OUT OF THAT THING.
SHAK

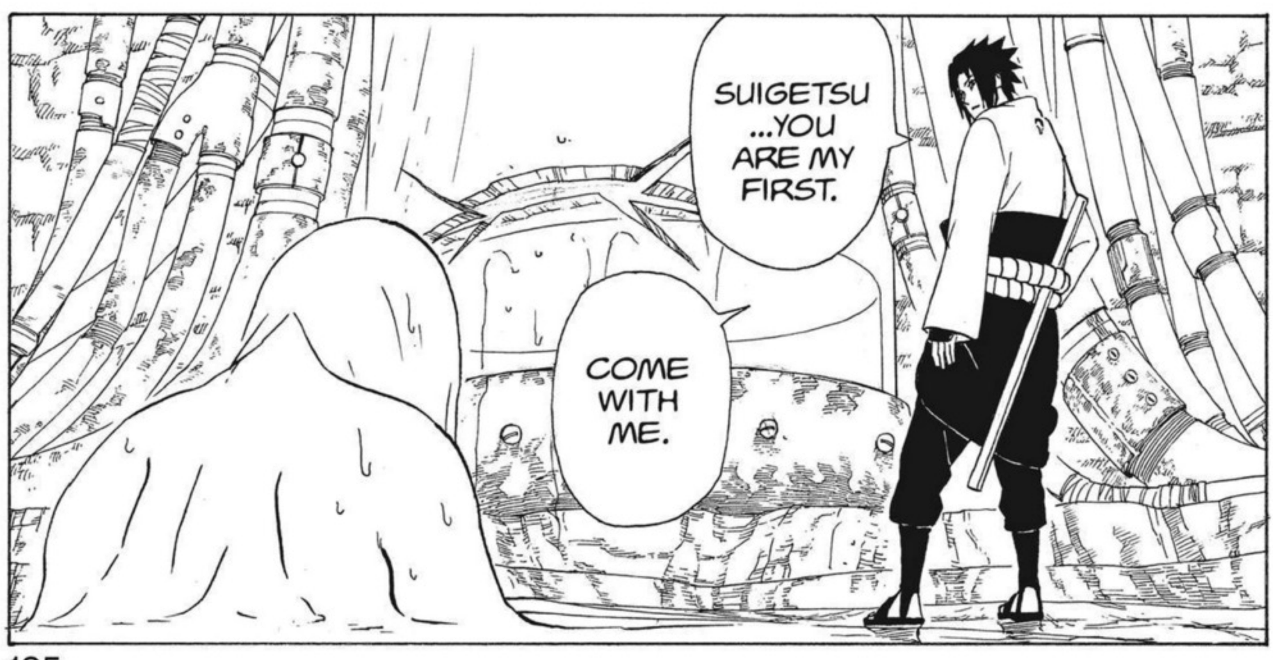
FSSSH

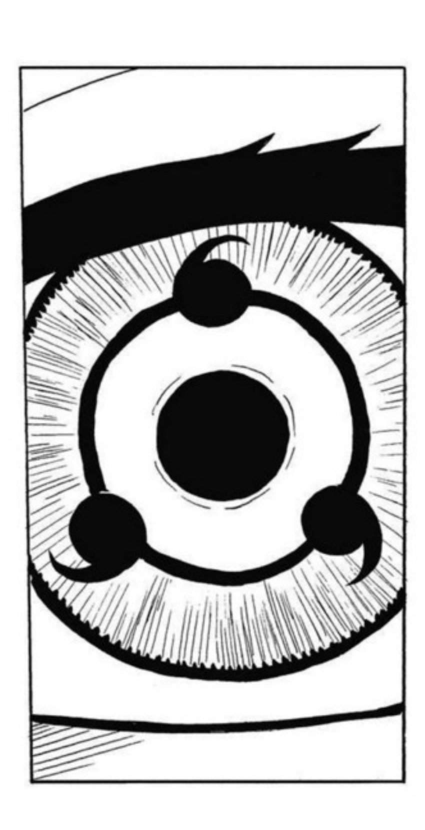

READ
THIS
WAY

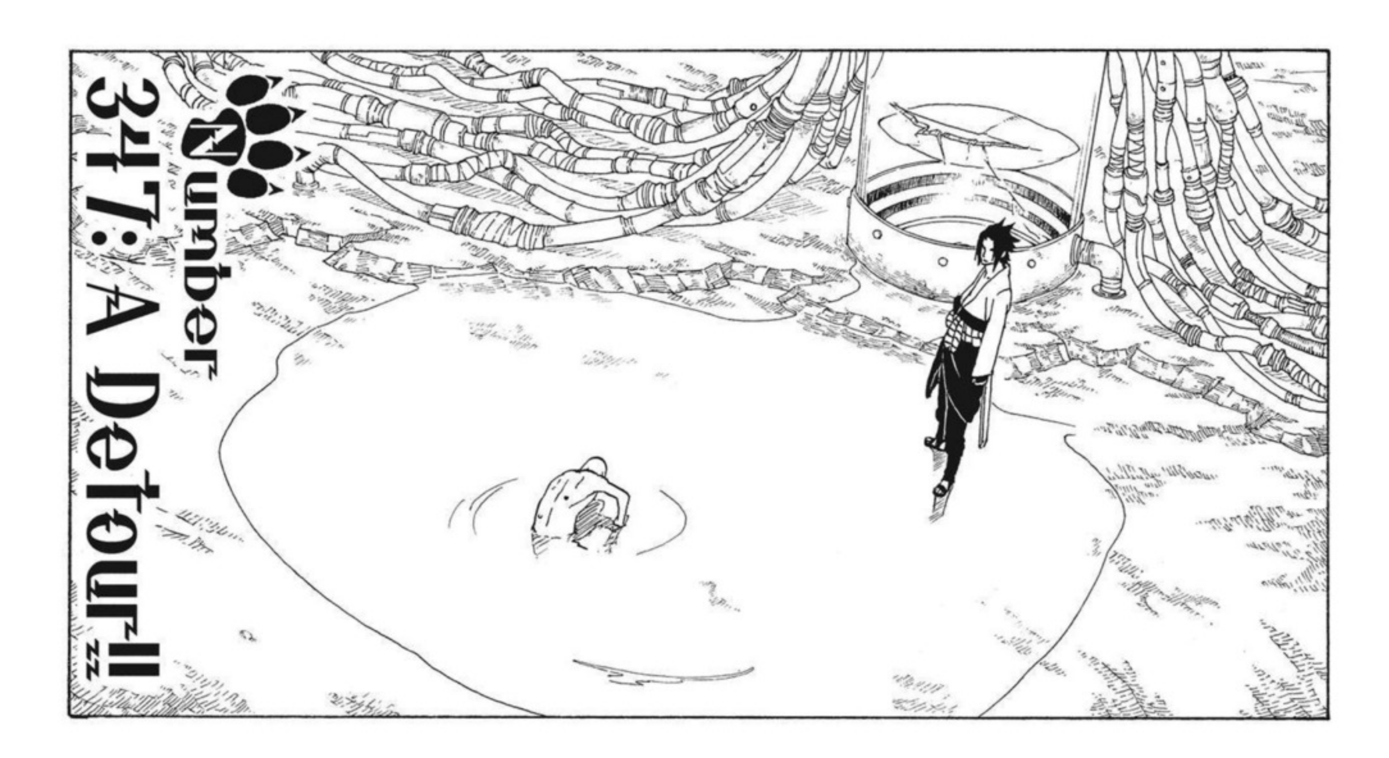

SPO SSH
CHINK


SPLASH

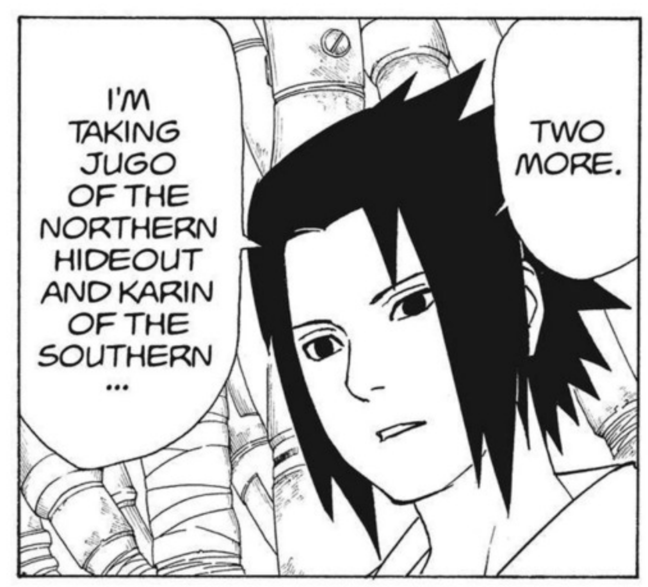

I'M FREE... AT LAST...
SLURR
MY REGARDS, SASUKE.


SUIGETSU ...YOU ARE MY FIRST.
COME WITH ME.

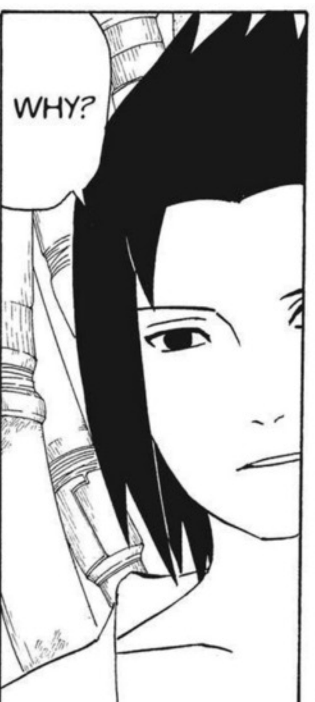


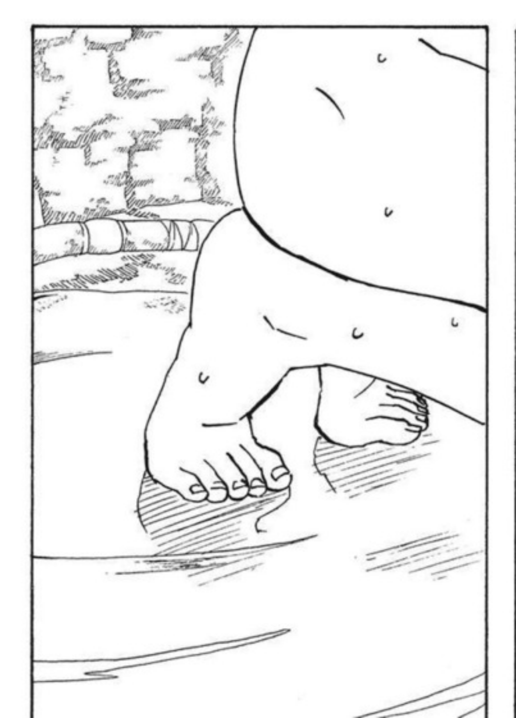

Number 347: A Detour!!


SLURR
I'M THE FIRST?
WHO ELSE, THEN?


TWO MORE.
I'M TAKING JUGO OF THE NORTHERN HIDEOUT AND KARIN OF THE SOUTHERN ...


YOU SERI-OUS?
SWIRL

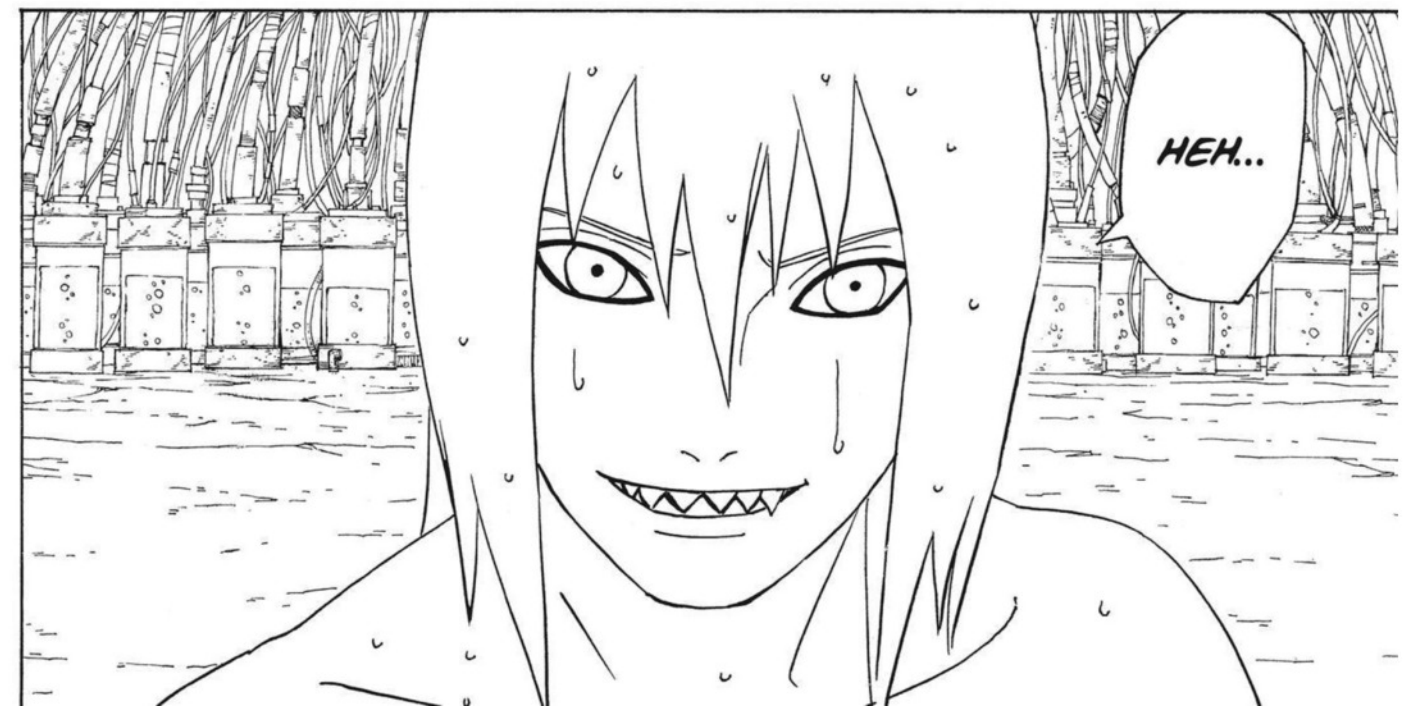

WHY?



WELL... I'M NOT PARTICU-LARLY FOND OF THEM.

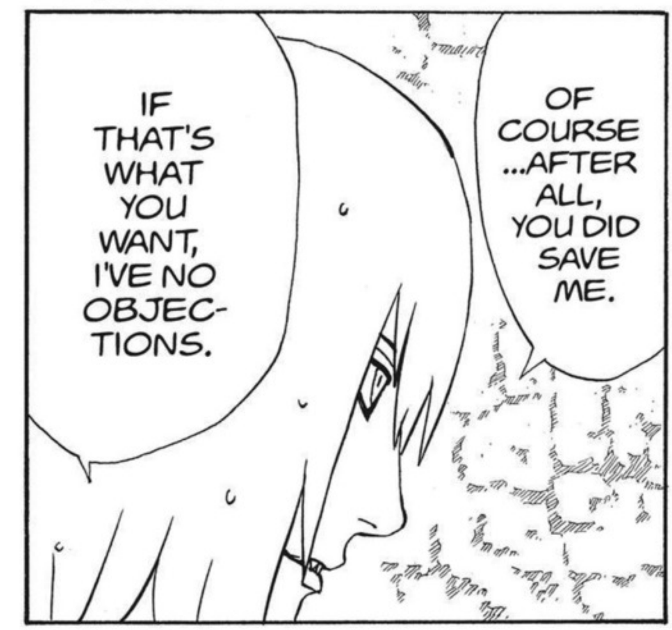
I JUST DON'T THINK WE'D GET ALONG, IS ALL.

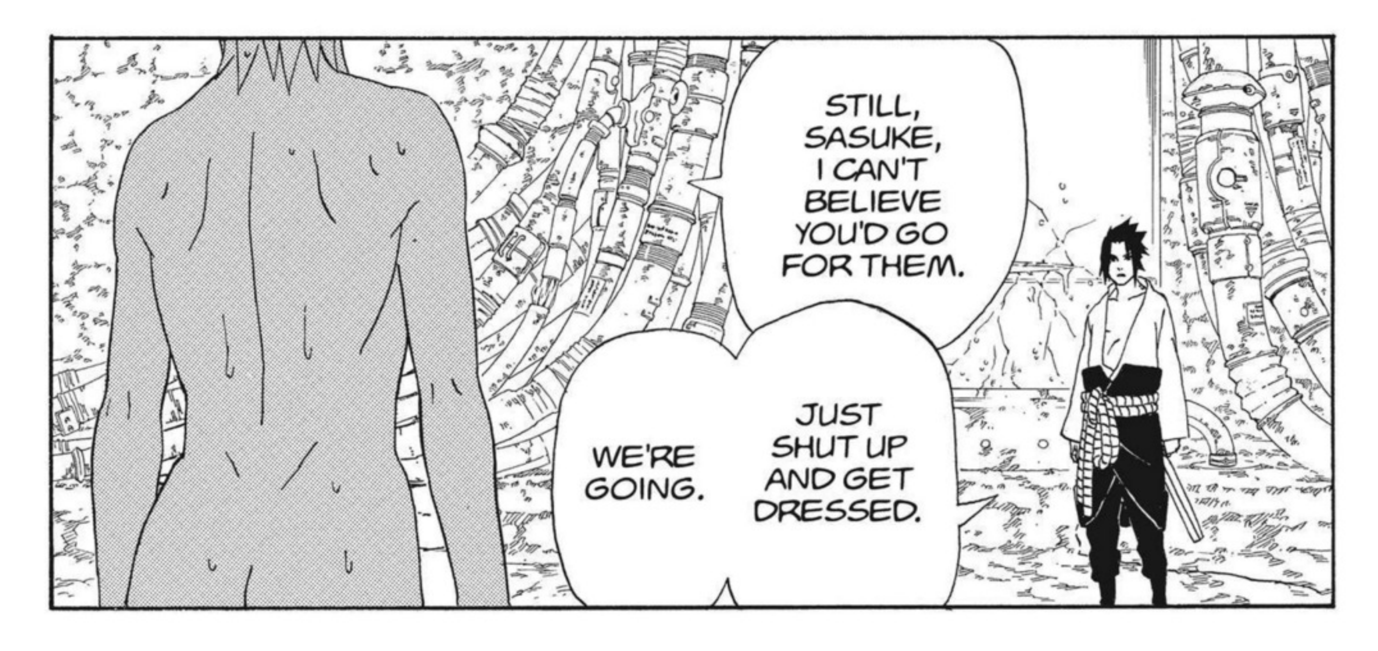
Number 347: A Detour!!

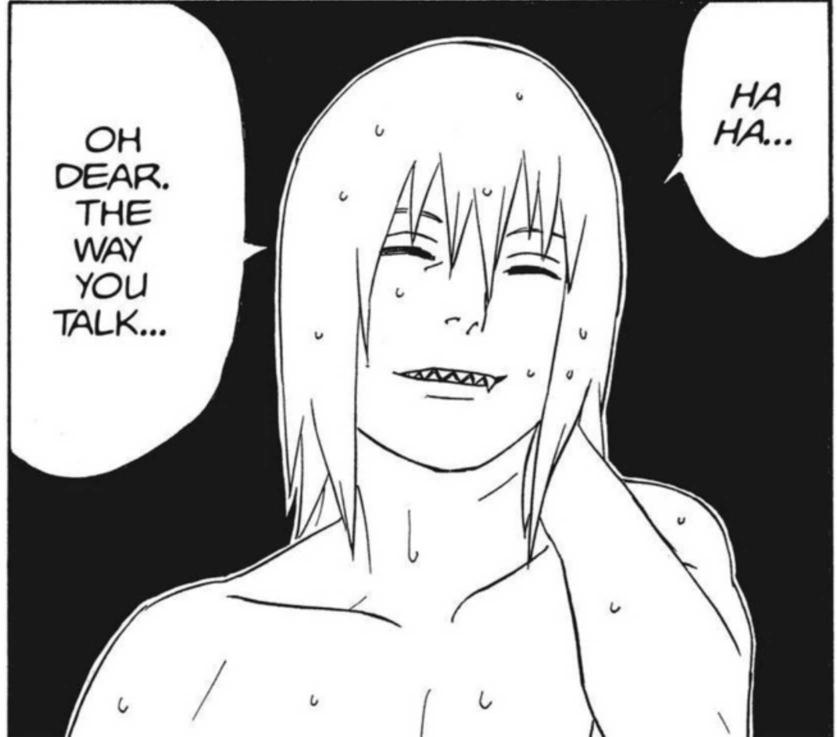


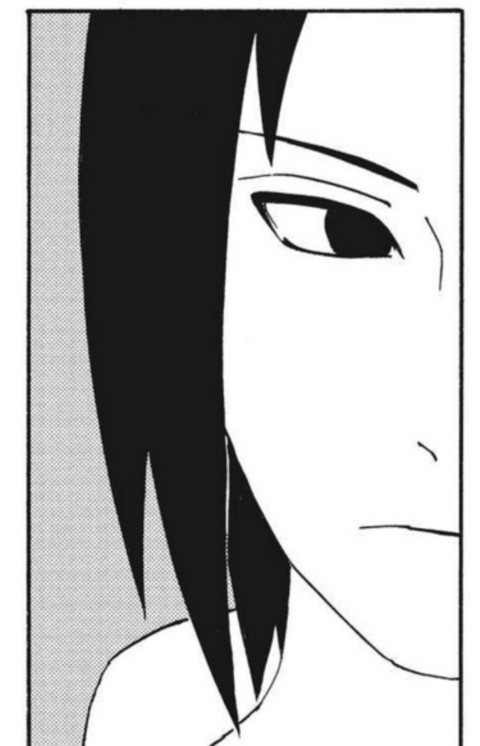

READ THIS WAY


YOU DON'T NEED TO BE FRIENDS.
JUST CO-OPERATE.


OF COURSE ...AFTER ALL, YOU DID SAVE ME.
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT, I'VE NO OBJECTIONS.


STILL, SASUKE, I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'D GO FOR THEM.
JUST SHUT UP AND GET DRESSED.
WE'RE GOING.

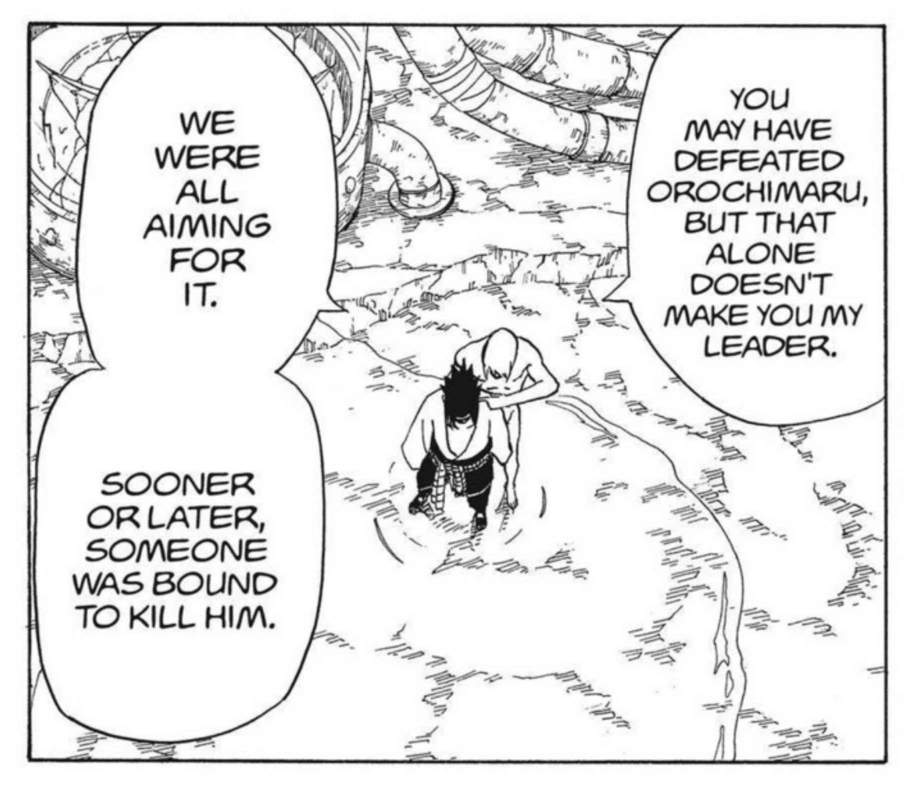

HA HA...
OH DEAR. THE WAY YOU TALK...



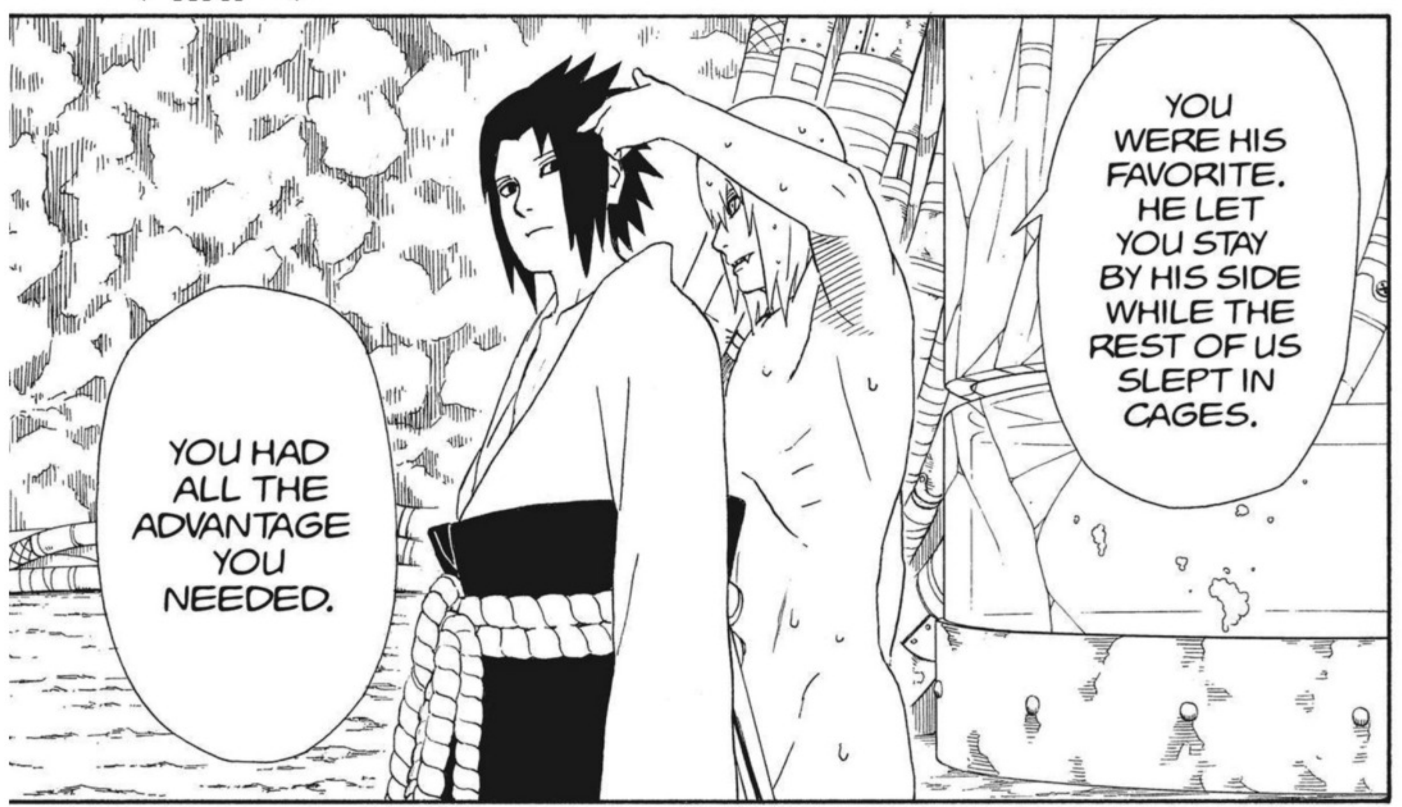
FIRST, LET'S CLARIFY OUR RELATIONSHIP...

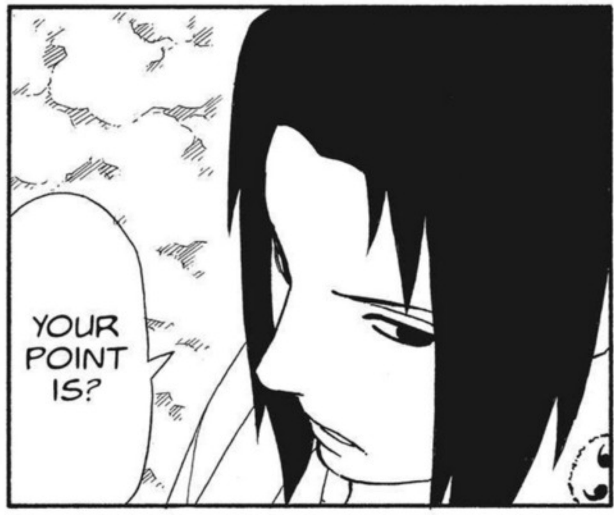
SHALL WE?

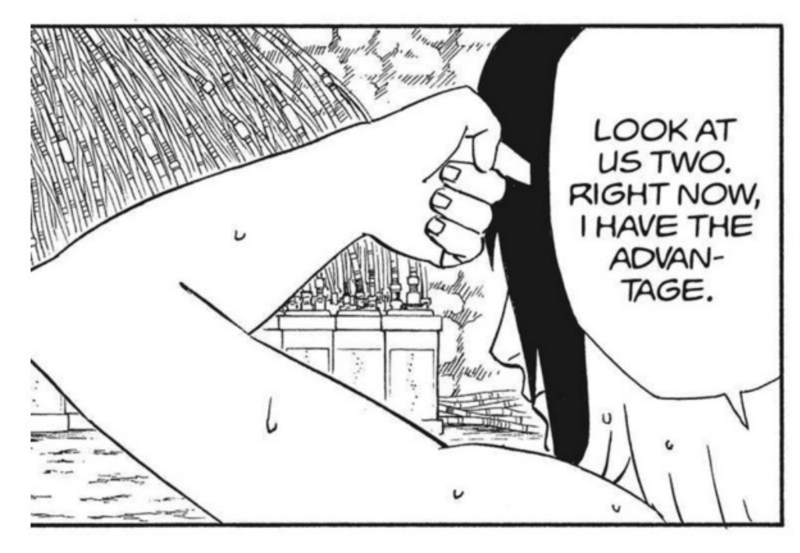





READ
THIS
WAY

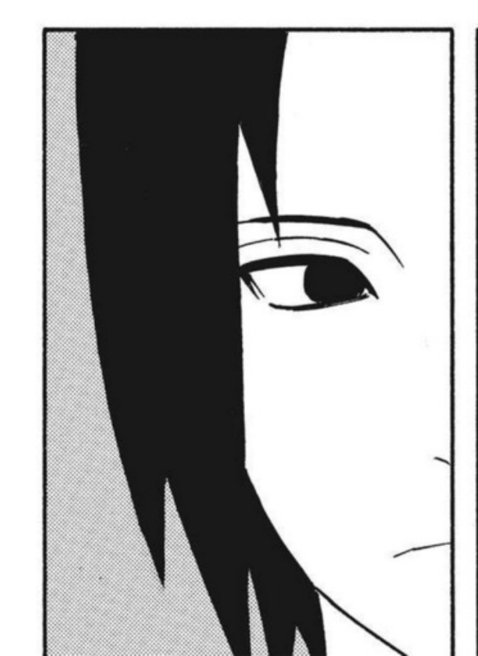

YOU WERE HIS FAVORITE. HE LET YOU STAY BY HIS SIDE WHILE THE REST OF US SLEPT IN CAGES.
YOU HAD ALL THE ADVANTAGE YOU NEEDED.


YOUR POINT IS?


LOOK AT US TWO. RIGHT NOW, I HAVE THE ADVAN-TAGE.

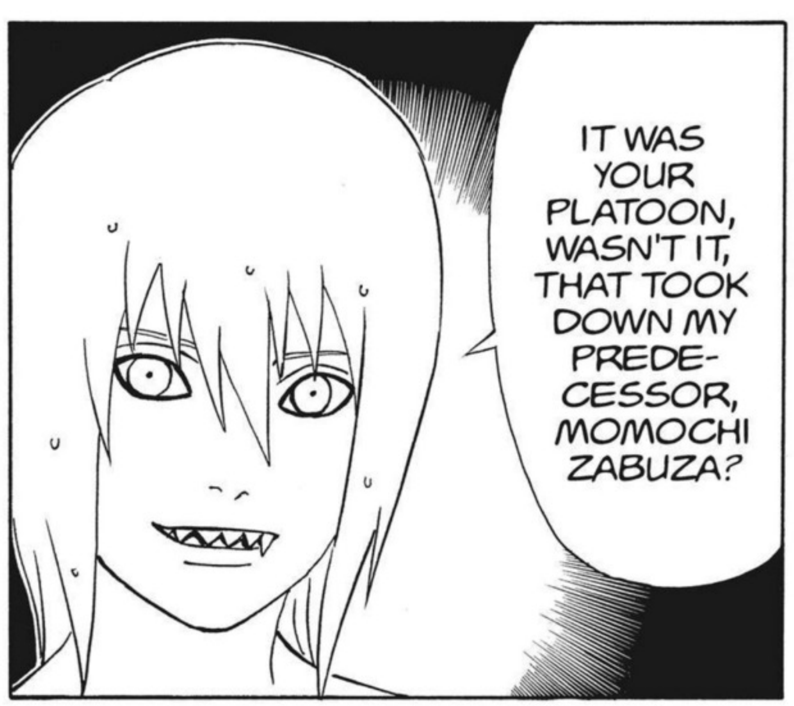

...






SHF
FORGET IT. JUST TESTING.
THAT WAS A PRETTY BAD SPOT I PUT YOU IN, AND YOU DIDN'T EVEN BLINK.
SO IT WASN'T LUCK, THEN. THAT'S REASSURING.


I'VE HEARD HOW STRONG YOU ARE.


IT WAS YOUR PLATOON, WASN'T IT, THAT TOOK DOWN MY PREDE-CESSOR, MOMOCHI ZABUZA?

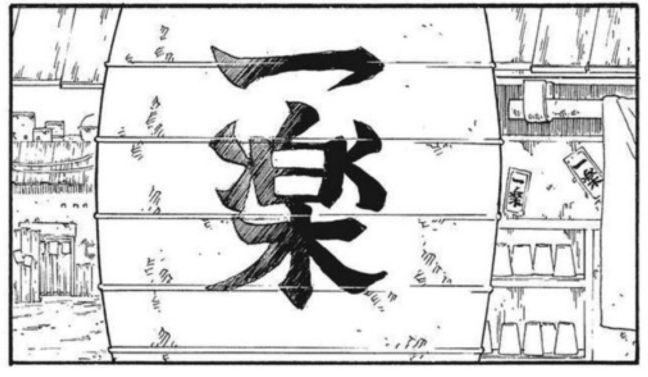

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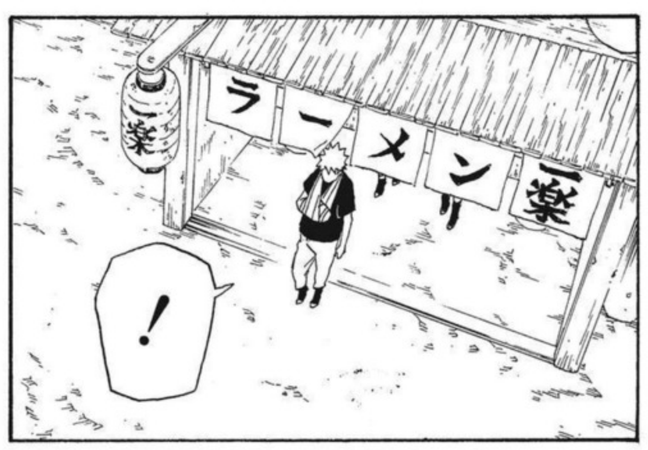

SURE, I'LL COME WITH YOU.


BUT BEFORE WE GO AND FETCH THE OTHERS...
THERE'S A PLACE I WANT TO SWING BY.


READ
THIS
WAY

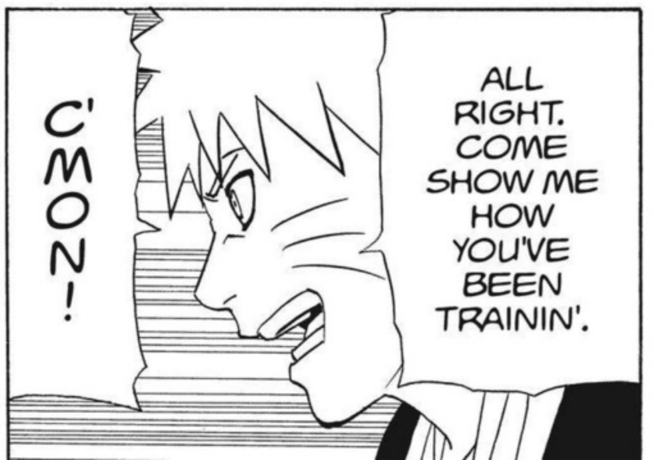



一楽


ラーメン一楽
!


YOU CAN CAST SHADOW DOPPEL-GANGERS NOW?


WHAT? WHAT'S GOING ON?
!


ALL RIGHT. COME SHOW ME HOW YOU'VE BEEN TRAININ'.
C'MON!


OKAY, NARUTO ... HERE GOES!

ART OF ONNA-NOKO TACHI !!









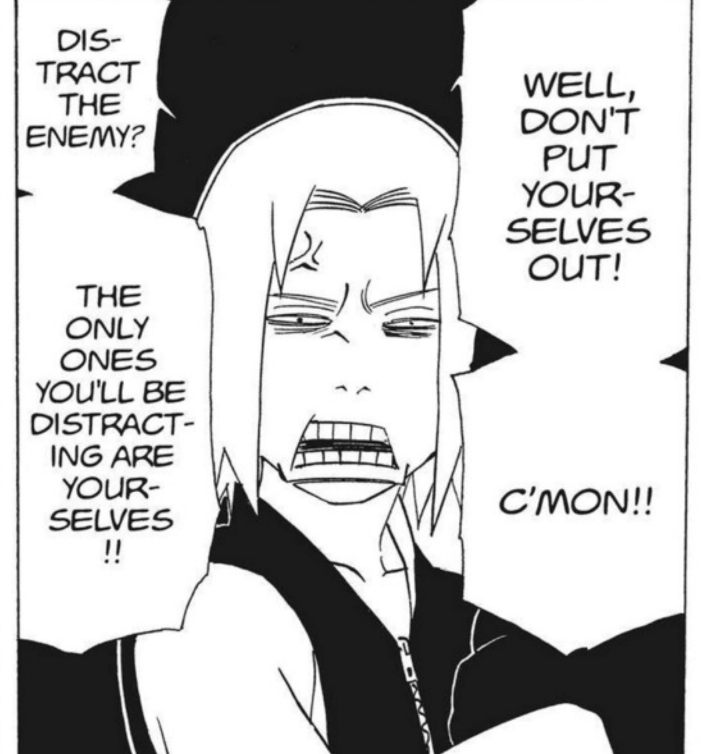

READ THIS WAY


ZIN
NG
WHAT D'YA THINK OF THAT, NARUTO?!
YOU SEE, WITH TWO GIRLS, IT'S EVEN...
STOMP STOMP STOMP


CRUMP
BLARGH!!
SAY NO MORE!
BONG

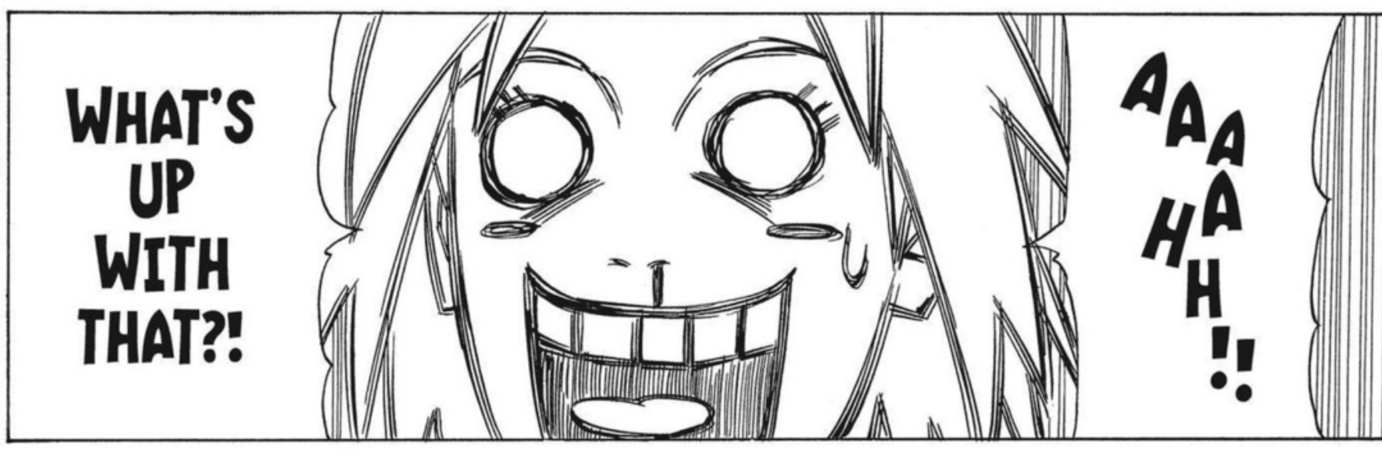

IS THIS WHAT YOU GUYS DO WHEN YOU GET TOGETHER?!
IS IT?!
ERR... IT'S A FORM OF DIVERSION, SEE...
AND THIS IS A, ERR, SERIOUS PROJECT BETWEEN US TWO...I MEAN, COMPETITION...




WELL, DON'T PUT YOURSELVES OUT!
C'MON!!
DISTRACT THE ENEMY?
THE ONLY ONES YOU'LL BE DISTRACTING ARE YOURSELVES!!

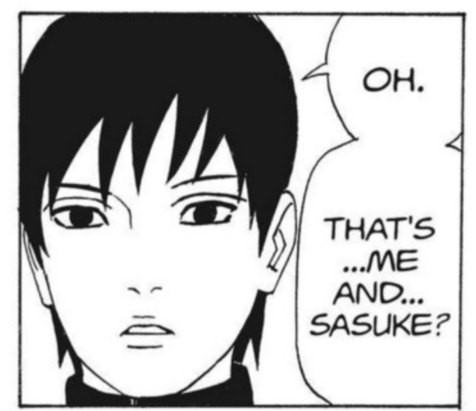

FWIP

BONNG
ART OF OTOKO-NOKO TACHI!!

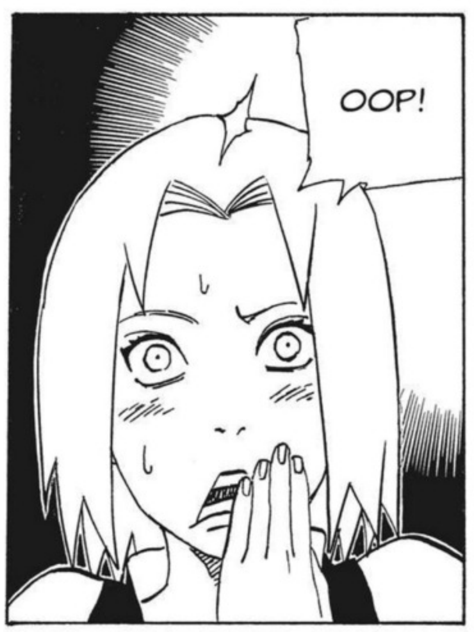


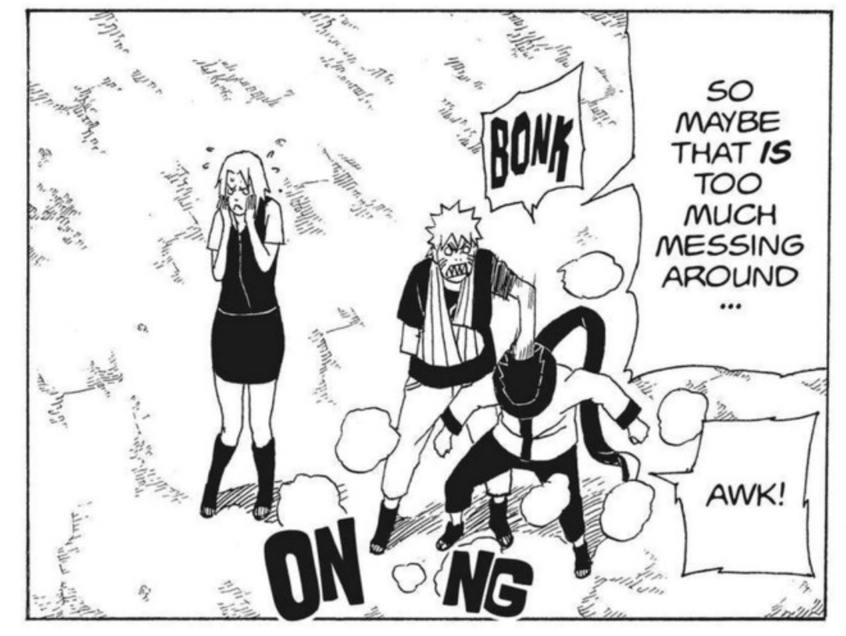


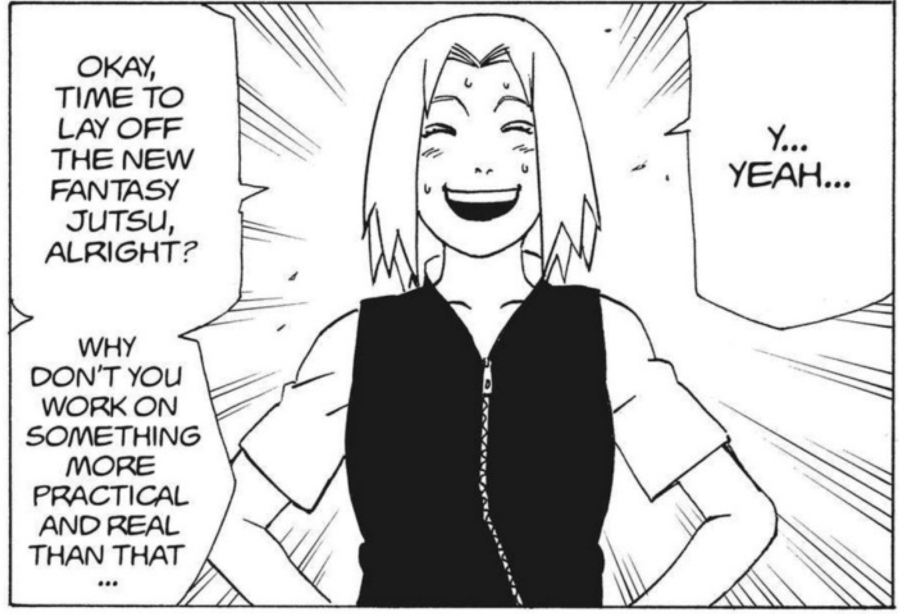


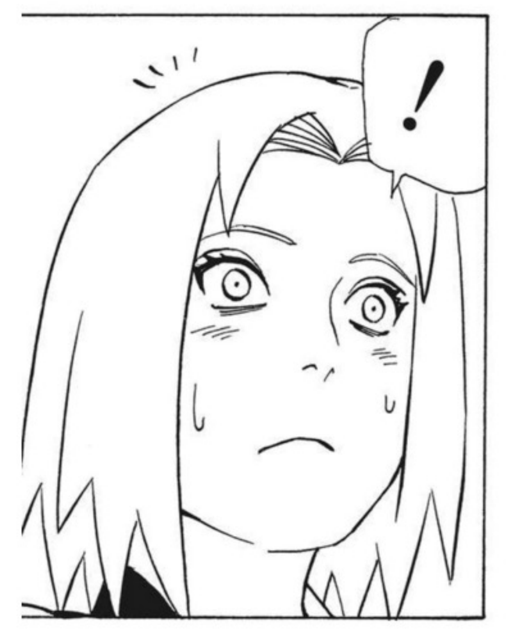



READ THIS WAY


OOP!

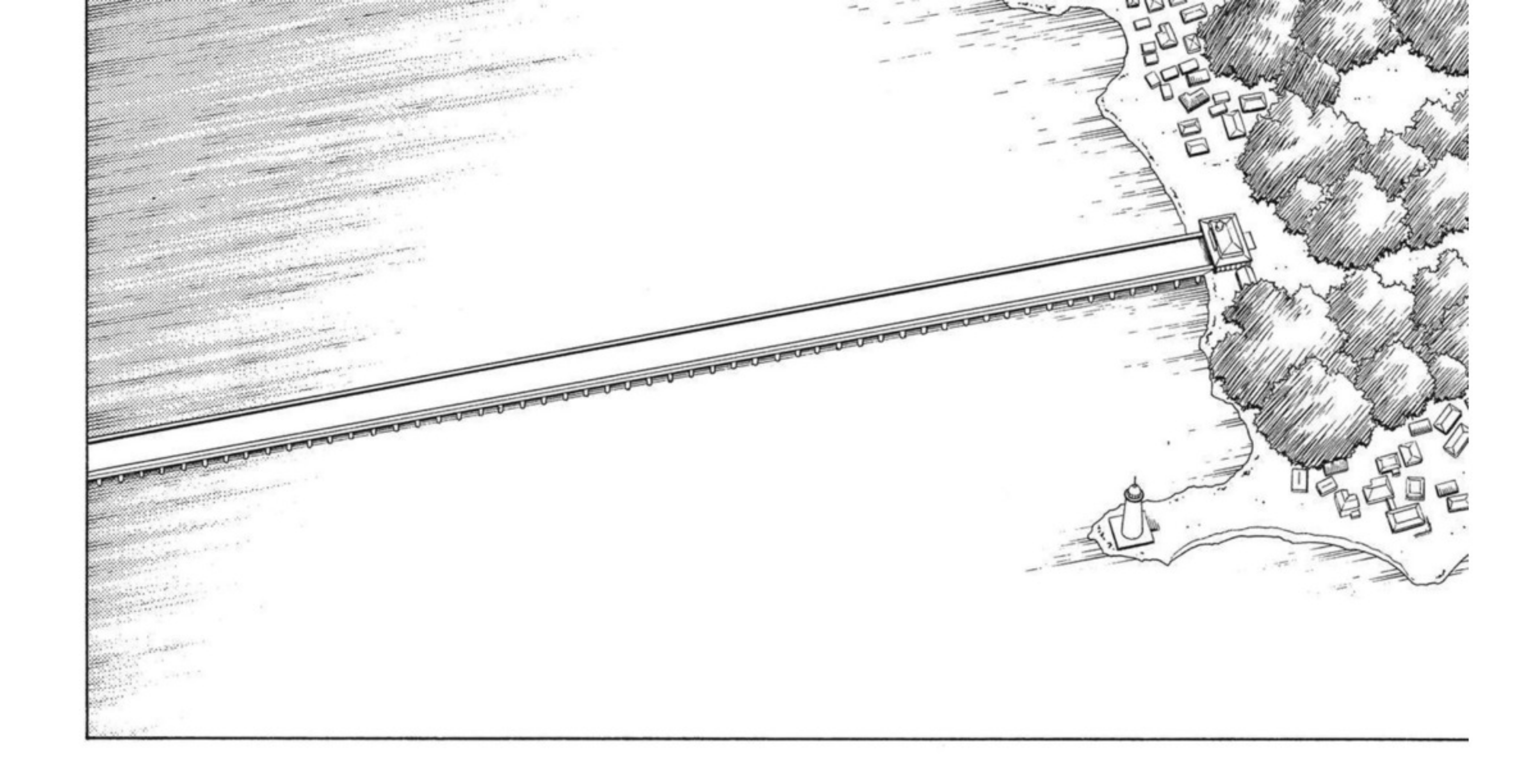

SO MAYBE THAT IS TOO MUCH MESSING AROUND ...
BONK
AWK!
ON
NG


Y... YEAH...
OKAY, TIME TO LAY OFF THE NEW FANTASY JUTSU, ALRIGHT?
WHY DON'T YOU WORK ON SOMETHING MORE PRACTICAL AND REAL THAN THAT ...


!


...
OH... WAIT, I DIDN'T MEAN...
NO, THAT'S NOT... REALLY, I DIDN'T MEAN THAT I...


HEH.
I KNEW IT...!

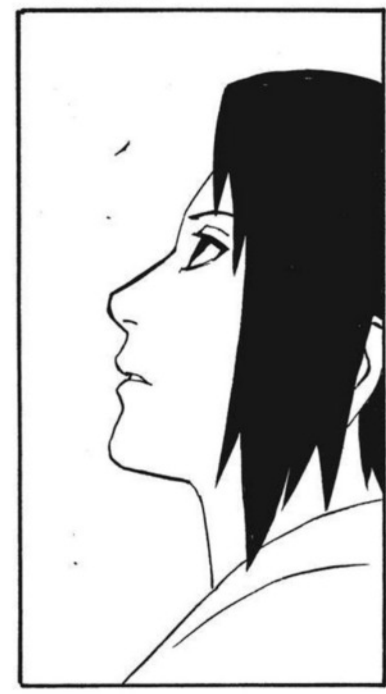


WHAT'S UP, SASUKE?



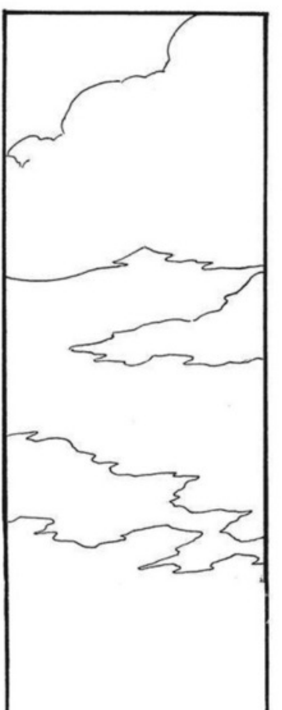


(THE GREAT NARUTO BRIDGE)





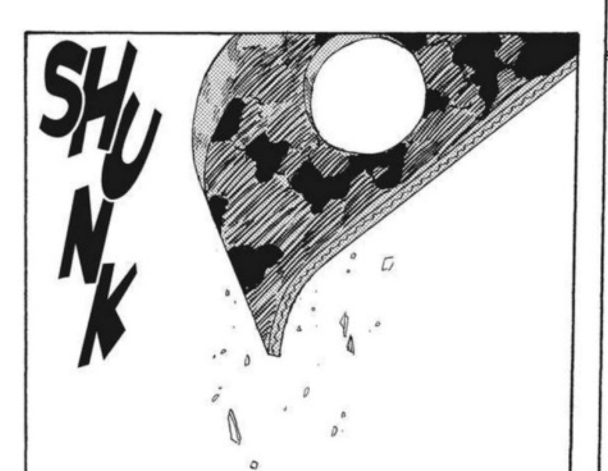







NEVER THOUGHT I'D FIND THIS HERE.
SHK


SORRY, MASTER ZABUZA. THIS IS MINE NOW.
GRIP

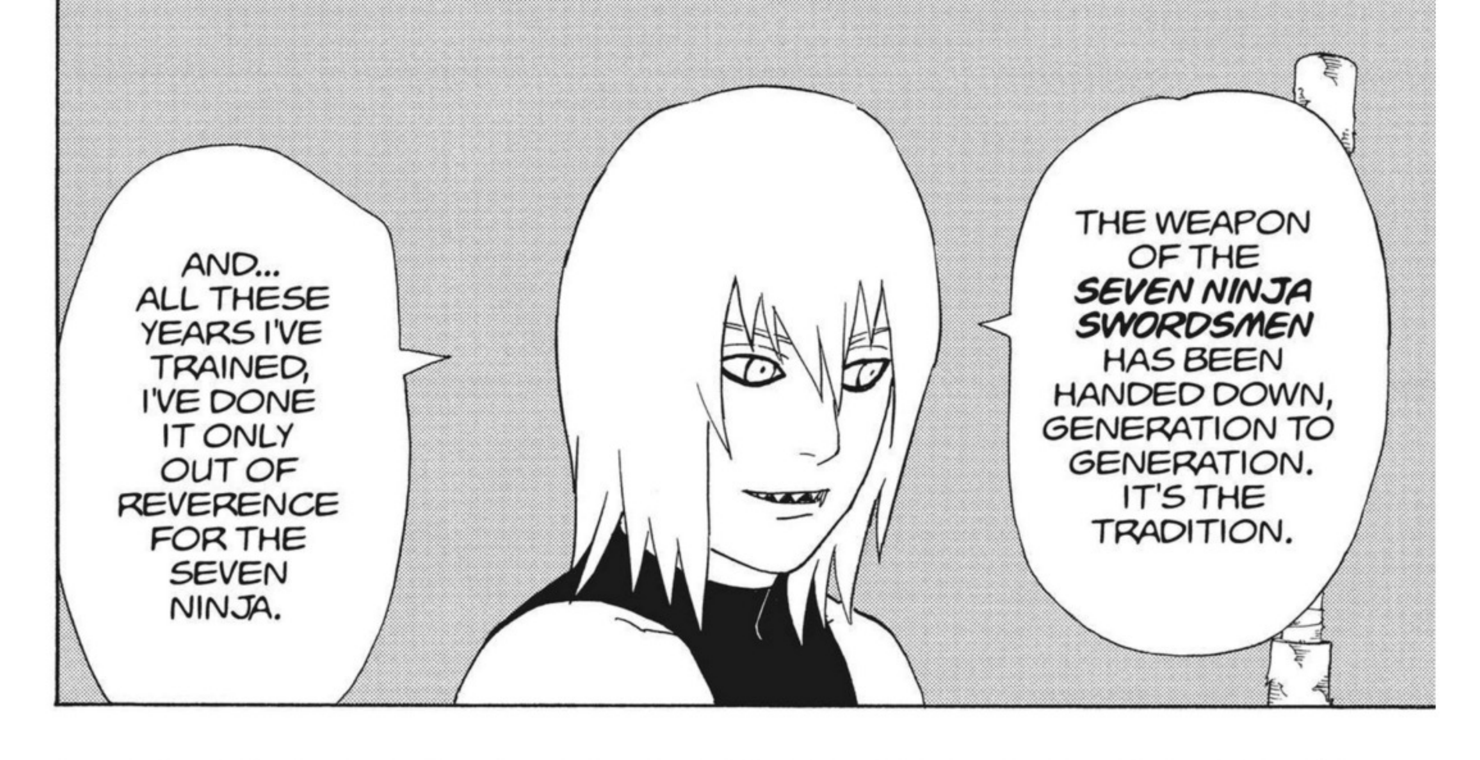

SHUNK

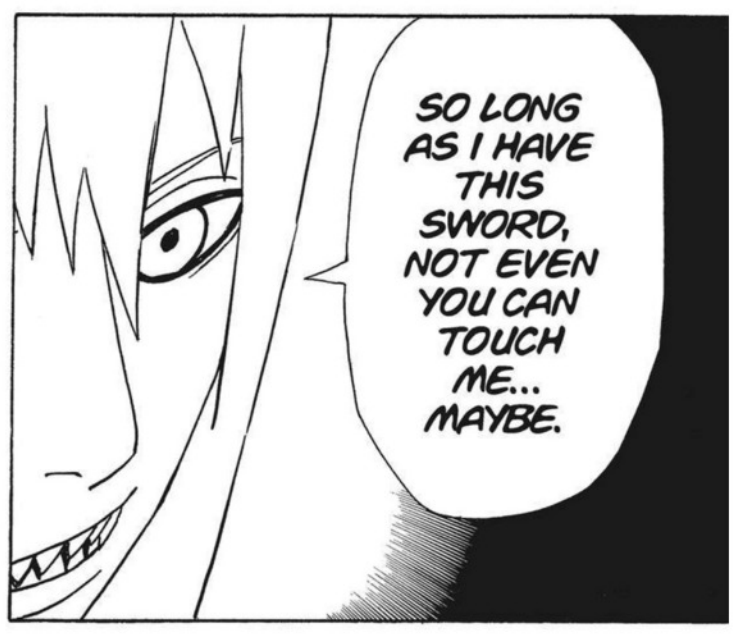


PRETTY HEAVY...

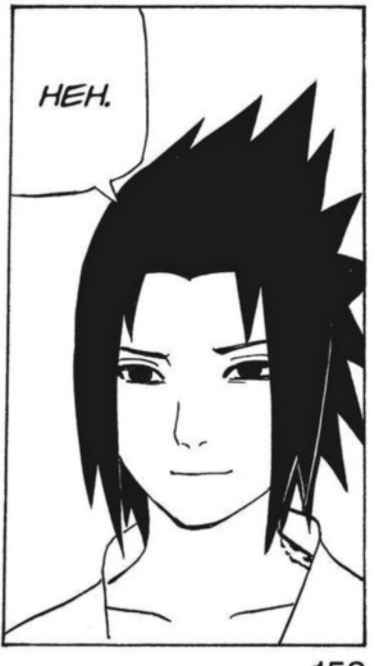
THIS IS THE EXECUTIONER'S BLADE, THE SWORD OF THE DEMON ZABUZA FROM THE VILLAGE OF BLOODY MIST.

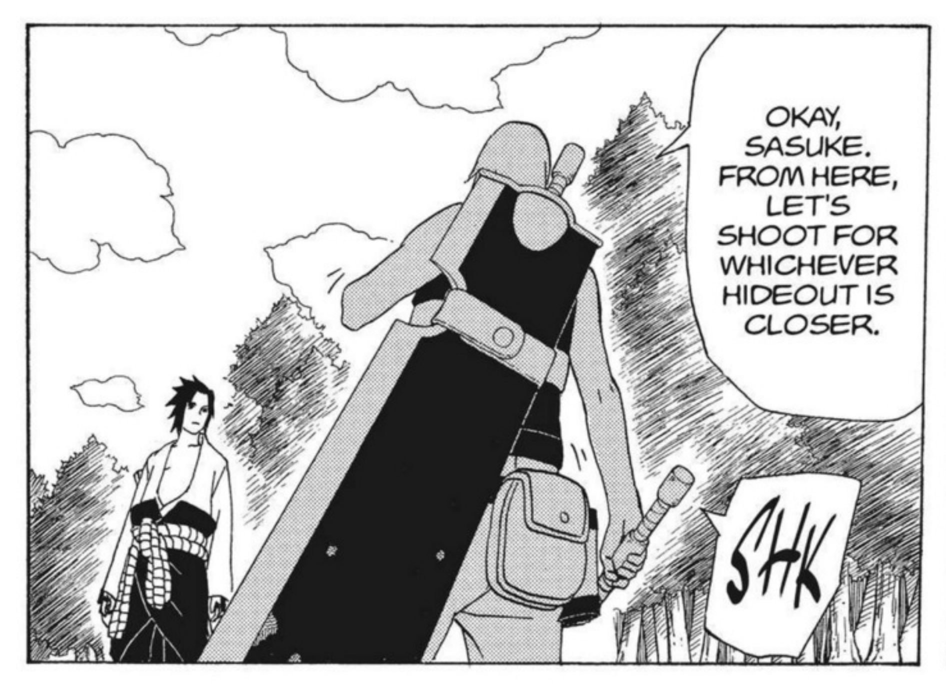



THE WEAPON OF THE SEVEN NINJA SWORDSMEN HAS BEEN HANDED DOWN, GENERATION TO GENERATION. IT'S THE TRADITION.
AND... ALL THESE YEARS I'VE TRAINED, I'VE DONE IT ONLY OUT OF REVERENCE FOR THE SEVEN NINJA.


SO LONG AS I HAVE THIS SWORD, NOT EVEN YOU CAN TOUCH ME... MAYBE.


BESIDES, IF YOU GOT TO HAVE JUGO...
THIS SWORD WILL DEFINITELY COME IN HANDY.

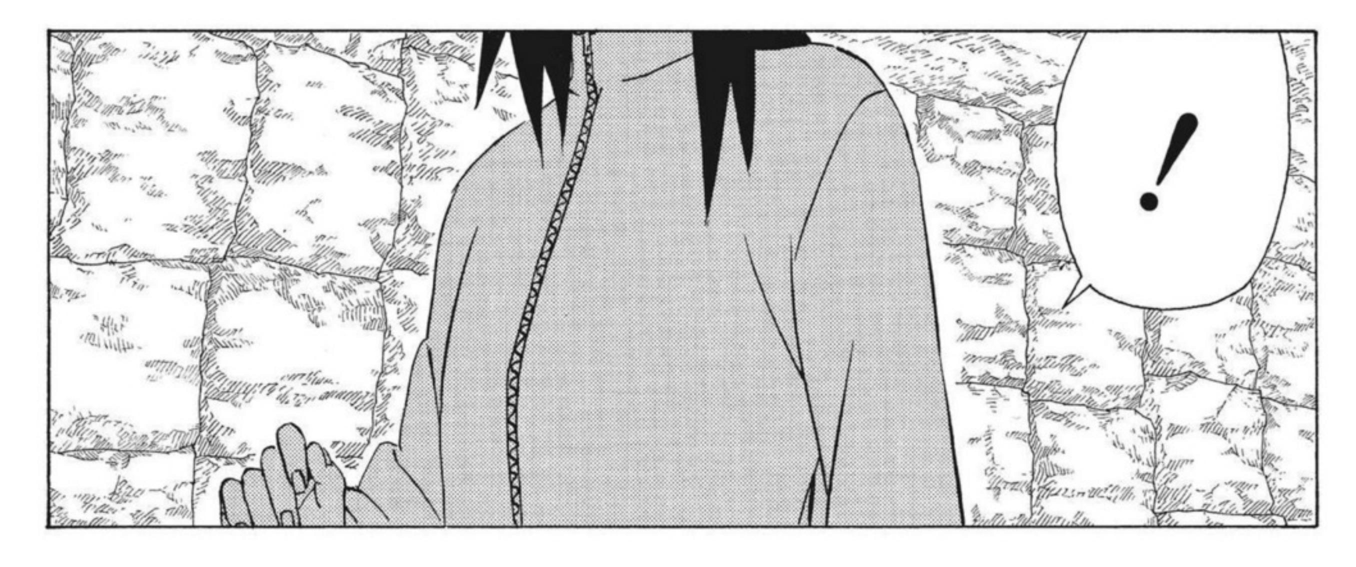

HEH.

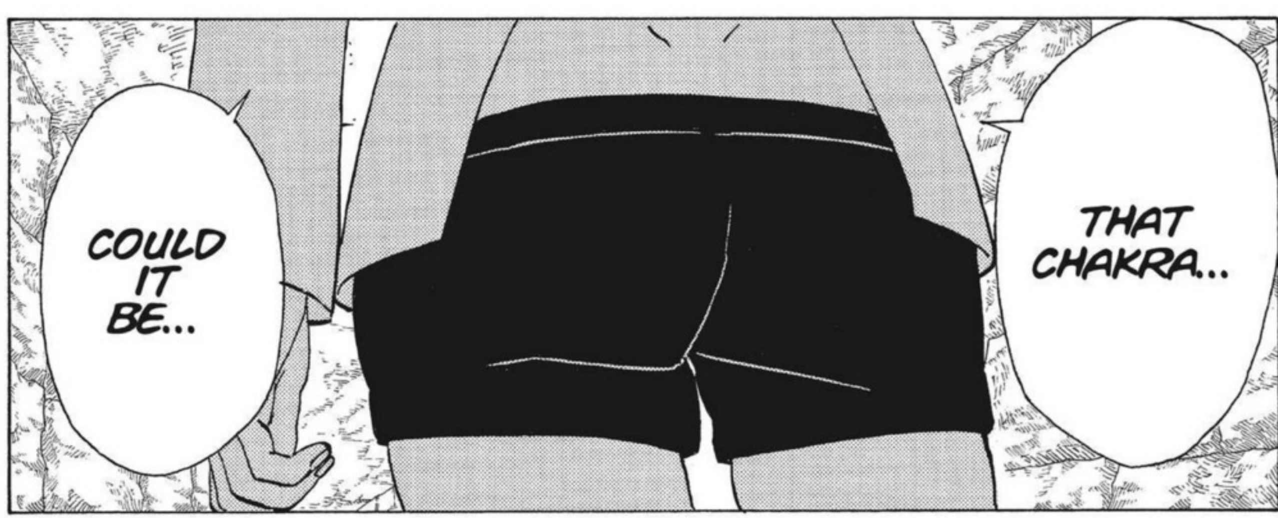

OKAY, SASUKE. FROM HERE, LET'S SHOOT FOR WHICHEVER HIDEOUT IS CLOSER.
SHK


READ
THIS
WAY


UWAAHH!!
WHAM


OROCHIMARU MAY BE DEAD, BUT THAT DOESN'T LEAVE YOU FREE TO ACT AS YOU PLEASE!

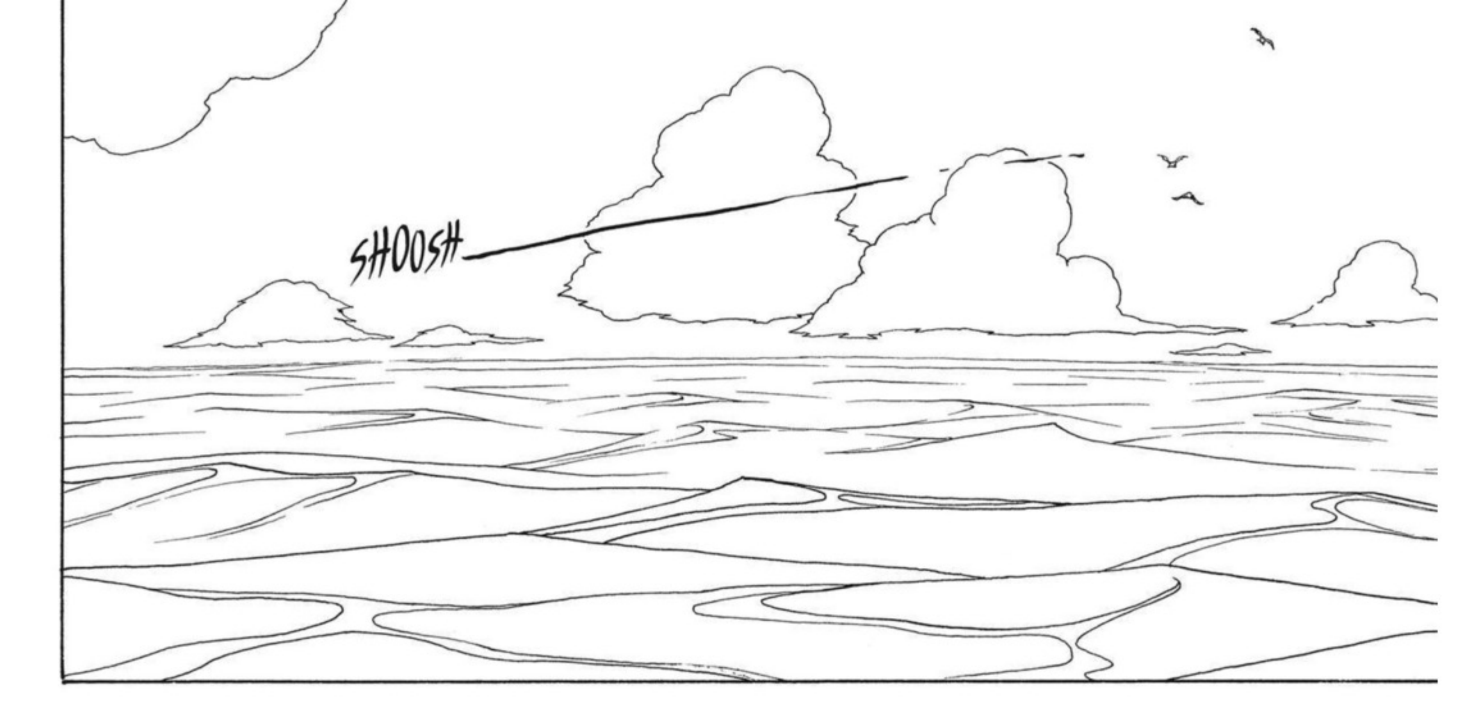

!


THAT CHAKRA...
COULD IT BE...


NARUTO



Number 348: And One Makes Three!!


SHOOSH


I HAVE TO ASK.
YEAH?

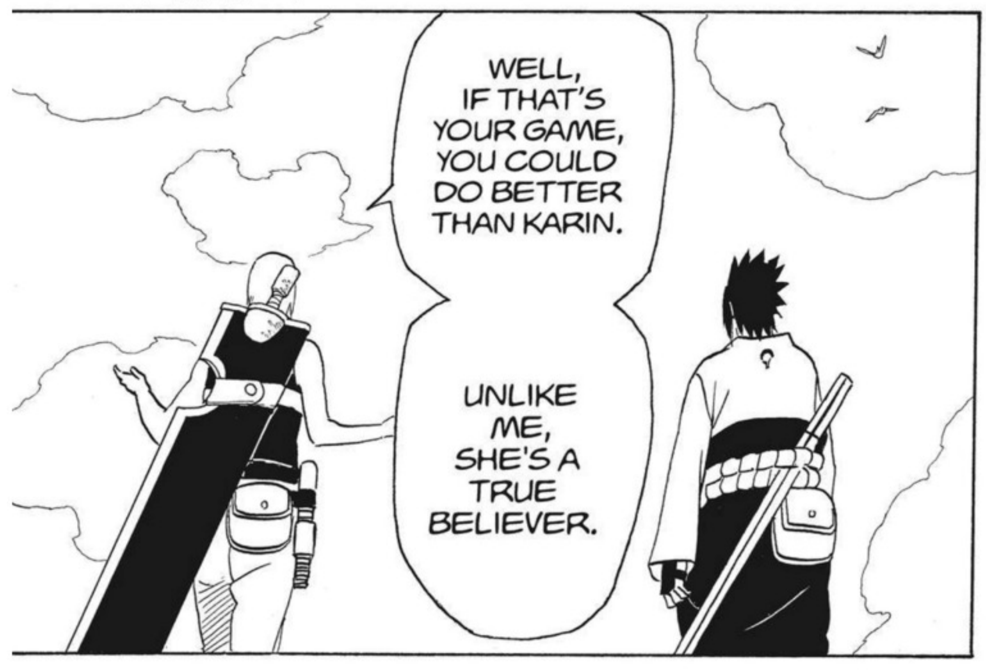

WHY ARE YOU DRAGGING A TEAM TOGETHER?

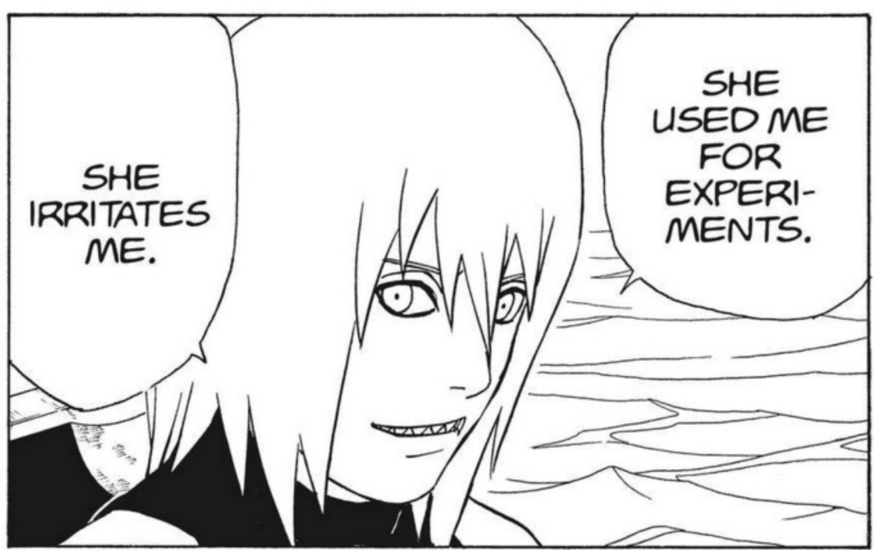

I HAVE A GOAL.
AND A SMALL TEAM...
...WILL LET ME REACH THAT GOAL FASTER.


OKAY... SO WHY ME?
EVER SINCE I JOINED OROCHI-MARU...
I'VE BEEN PREPARING FOR THIS. I ALWAYS TAKE NOTE OF SHINOBI WHO CATCH MY EYE.


READ THIS WAY


HEH ...


WELL, IF THAT'S YOUR GAME, YOU COULD DO BETTER THAN KARIN.
UNLIKE ME, SHE'S A TRUE BELIEVER.


SHE USED ME FOR EXPERI-MENTS.
SHE IRRITATES ME.

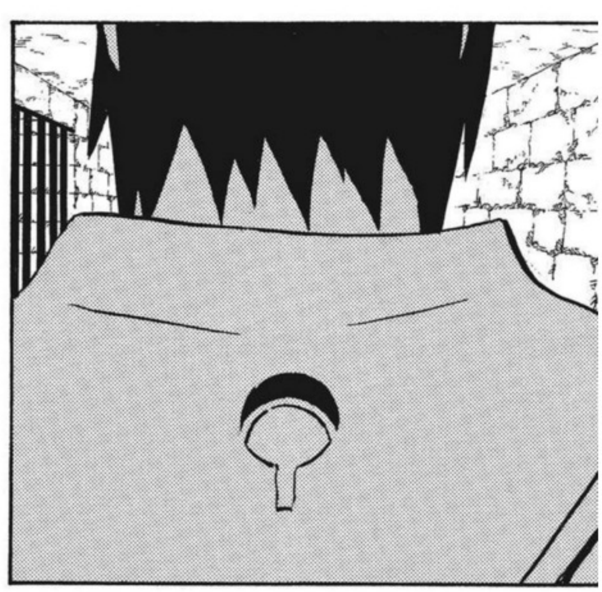

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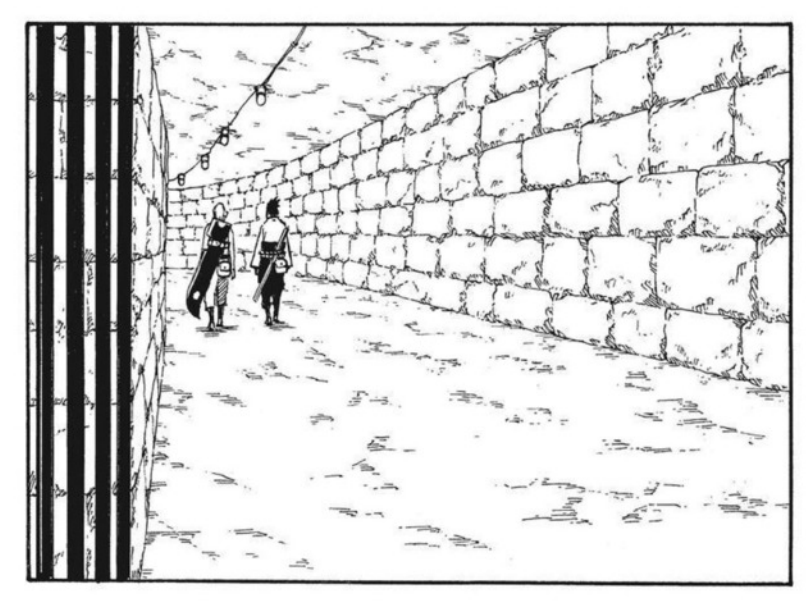

SURE. THERE ARE PLENTY OF OTHER SHINOBI JUST AS STRONG YET FAR EASIER TO HANDLE.
BUT SHE HAS A SPECIAL ABILITY ...
ONE THAT NO ONE ELSE POS-SESSES.


SH SHOOSH
TRUE... I CAN'T DENY THAT.

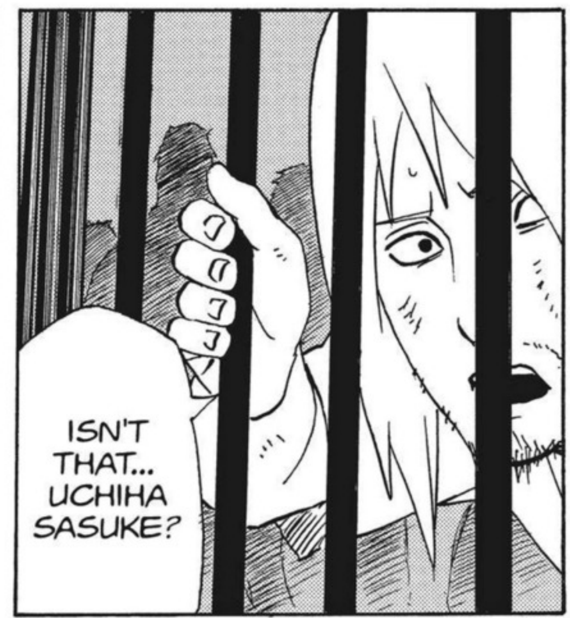

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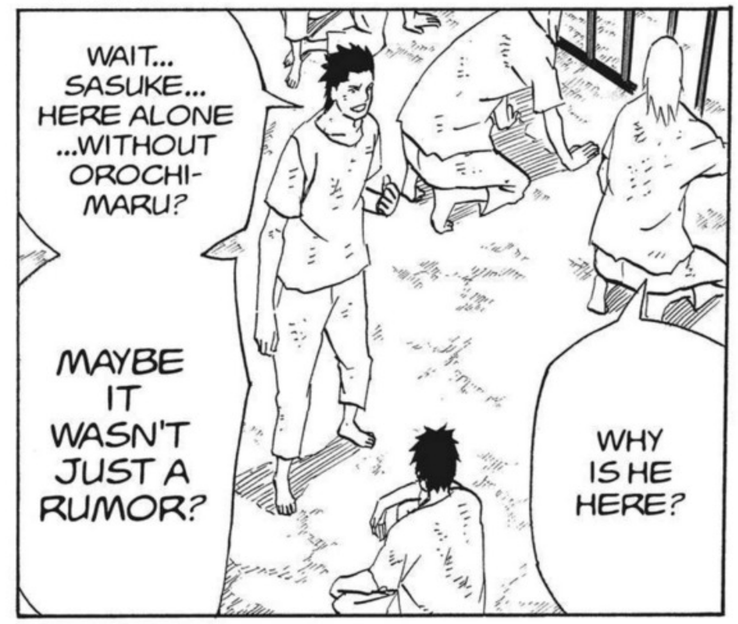

SHK
SHK





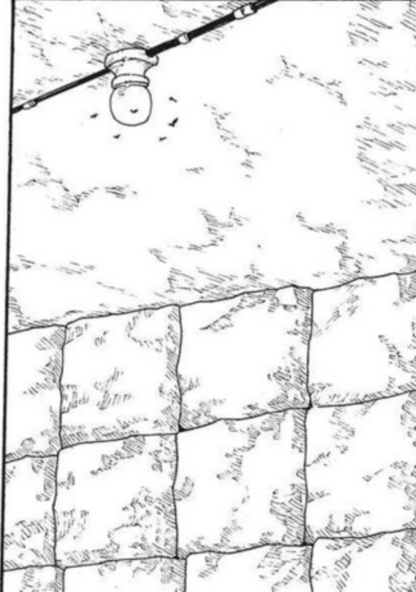

READ
THIS
WAY

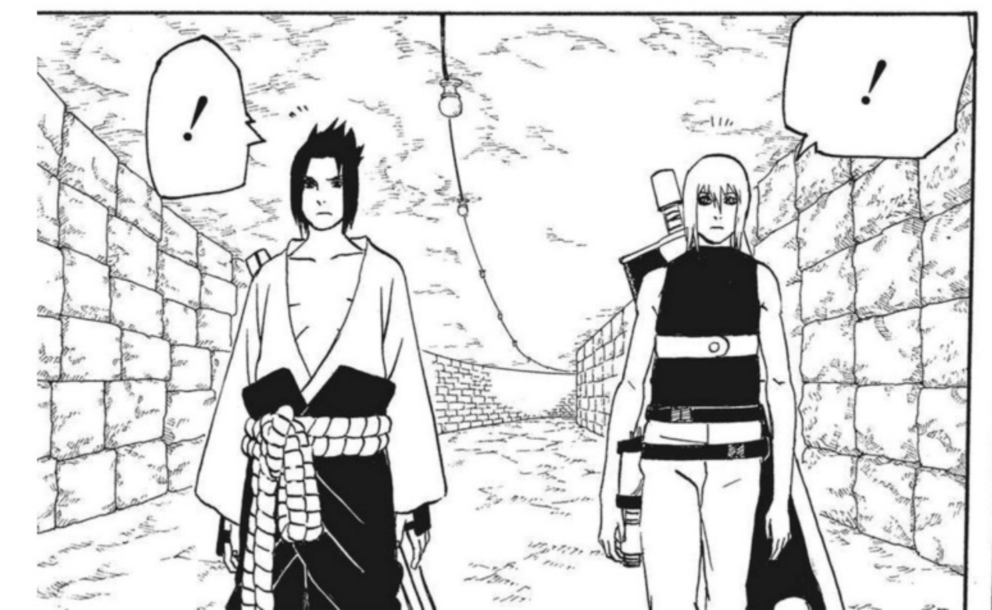

ISN'T THAT... UCHIHA SASUKE?


WHY IS HE HERE?
WAIT... SASUKE... HERE ALONE ...WITHOUT OROCHI-MARU?
MAYBE IT WASN'T JUST A RUMOR?


IT MUST BE TRUE!
HE KILLED OROCHI-MARU!
AND HE'S COME TO SET US FREE!!


LISTEN TO YOUR-SELF. DON'T BE AN IDIOT.
OROCHI-MARU CAN'T BE DEFEATED.

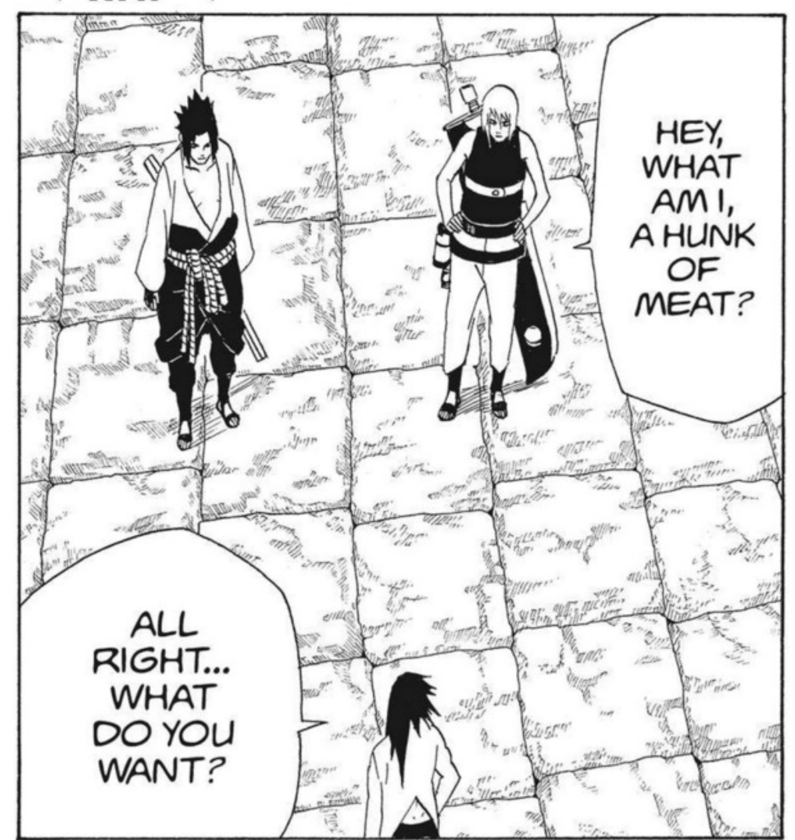



!
!


I KNEW IT WAS YOU TWO...

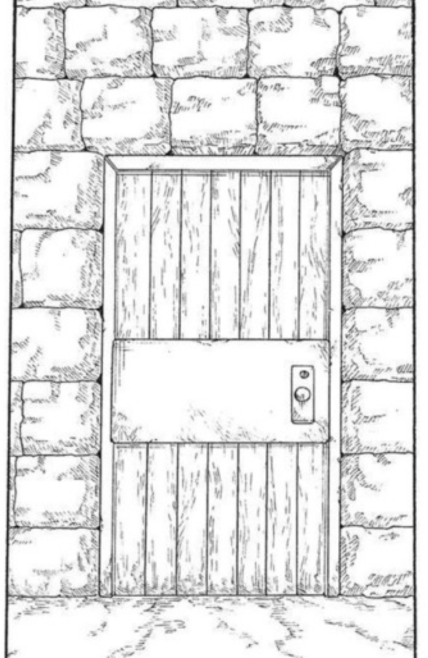

READ THIS WAY


SASUKE. WITHOUT A CHAPERONE, I SEE.
SO IT WASN'T JUST A RUMOR, WAS IT.

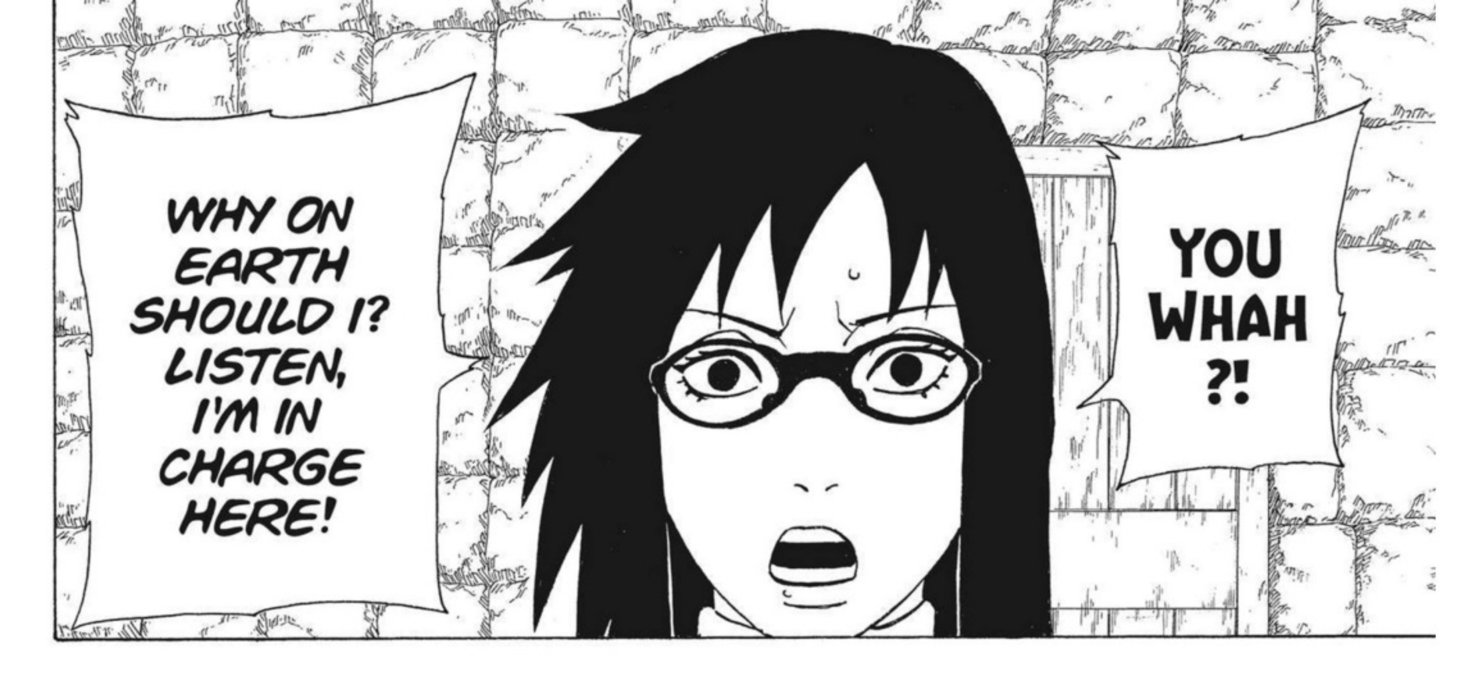

HEY, WHAT AM I, A HUNK OF MEAT?
ALL RIGHT... WHAT DO YOU WANT?

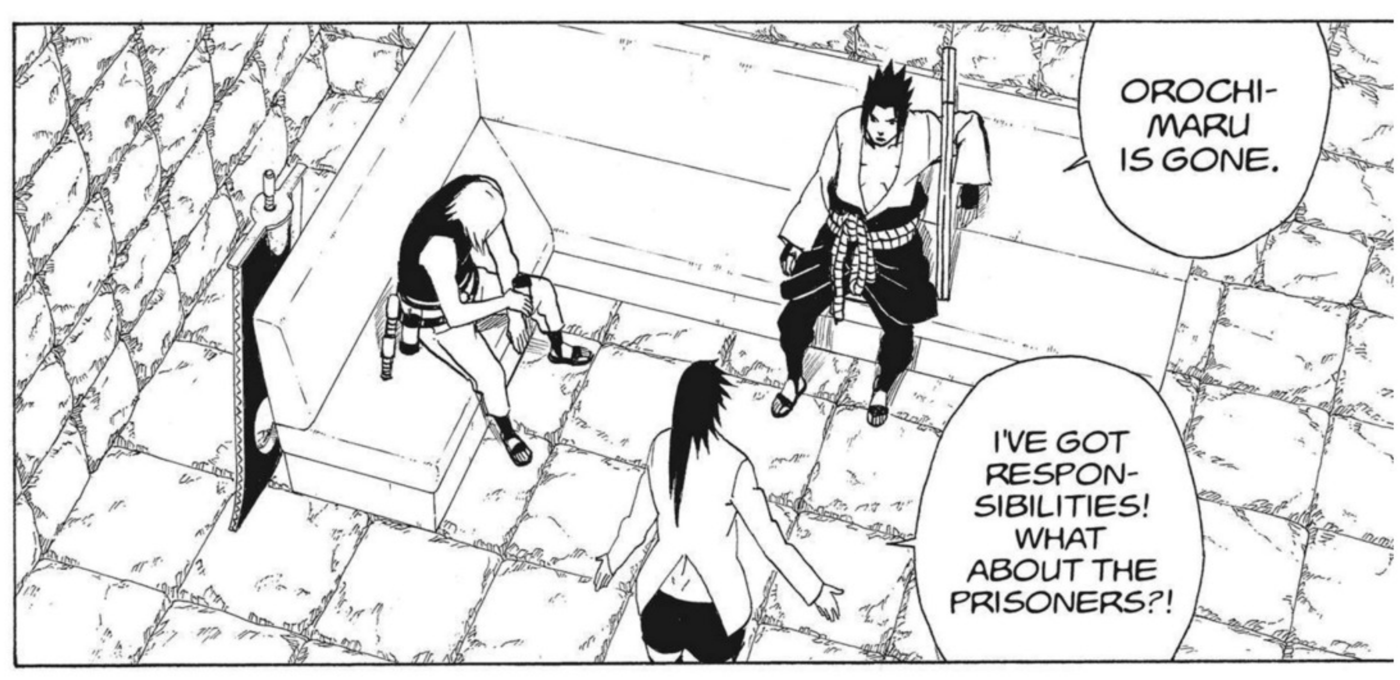

SASUKE WANTS TO TALK TO YOU.
SHOW US TO A ROOM WHERE WE CAN SIT DOWN AND CHAT. I'M BUSHED. NOT USED TO WALKING SO FAR.


HMPH ...




KARIN, JOIN ME.
I NEED YOU.


YOU WHAH ?!
WHY ON EARTH SHOULD I? LISTEN, I'M IN CHARGE HERE!


OROCHI-MARU IS GONE.
I'VE GOT RESPON-SIBILITIES! WHAT ABOUT THE PRISONERS?!

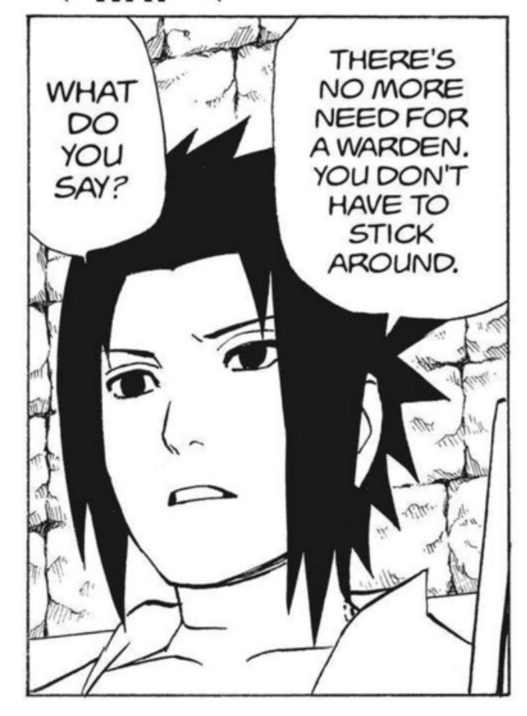

SUIGETSU, GO AND LIBERATE EVERY PRISONER IN THE COMPOUND.


WHA...


HAA...
YOU AND THAT COMMAND-ING TONE OF VOICE...


READ THIS WAY


DON'T YOU DARE!
SST

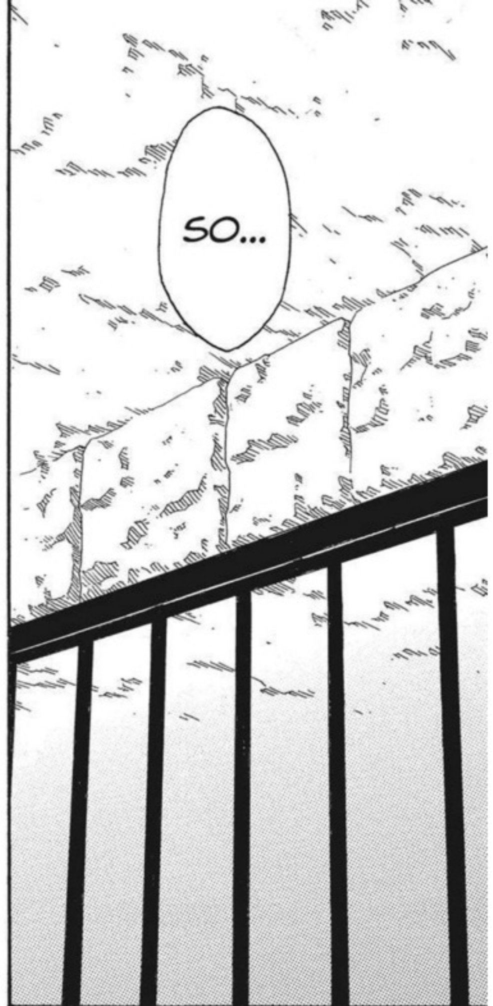

THERE'S NO MORE NEED FOR A WARDEN. YOU DON'T HAVE TO STICK AROUND.
WHAT DO YOU SAY?


G-CHAK


I SAY NO THANKS!
...
I HAVE NO REASON TO JOIN YOU!!


...


FINE.
IF YOU'RE NOT INTERESTED, I'LL GO FIND SOMEONE ELSE.

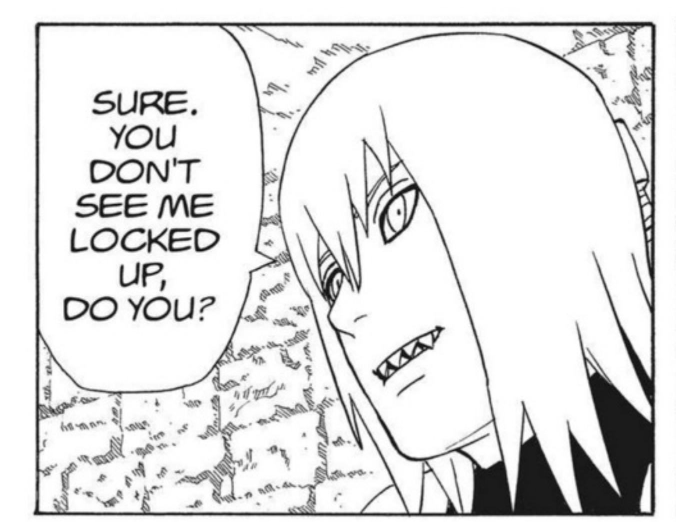

SO...


UCHIHA SASUKE DID KILL OROCHIMARU!
YOU GOT IT.

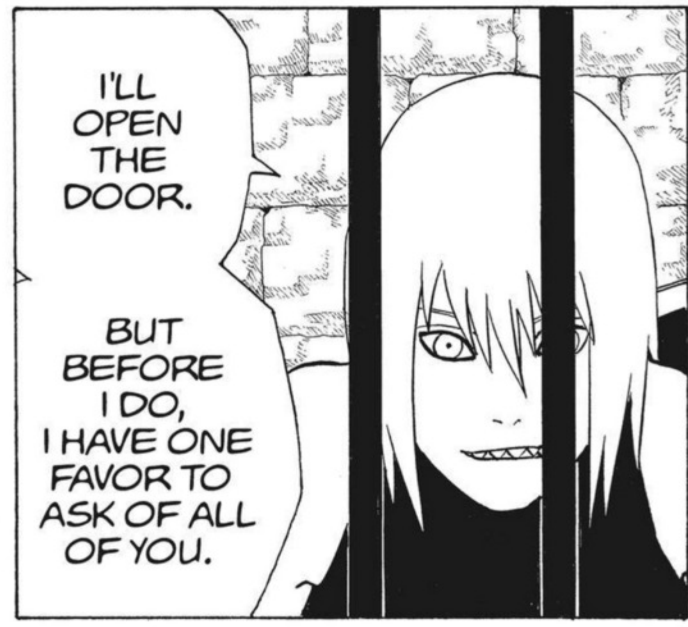

THEN WHAT HAPPENS TO US?

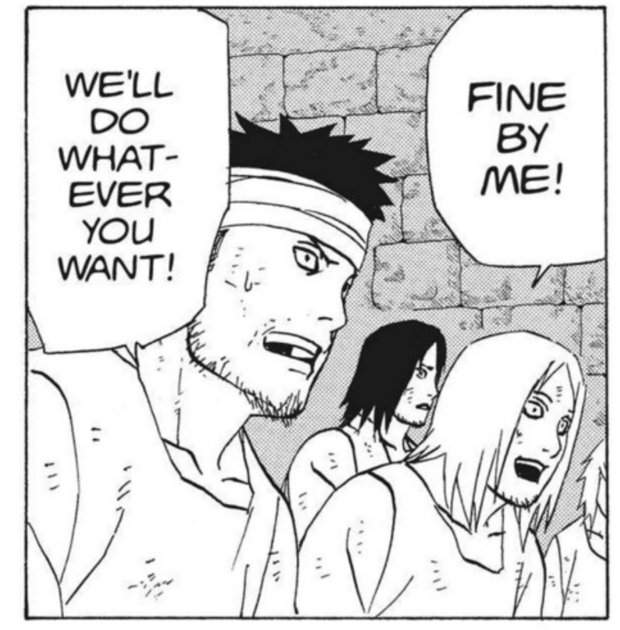

YOU GO FREE, OF COURSE.

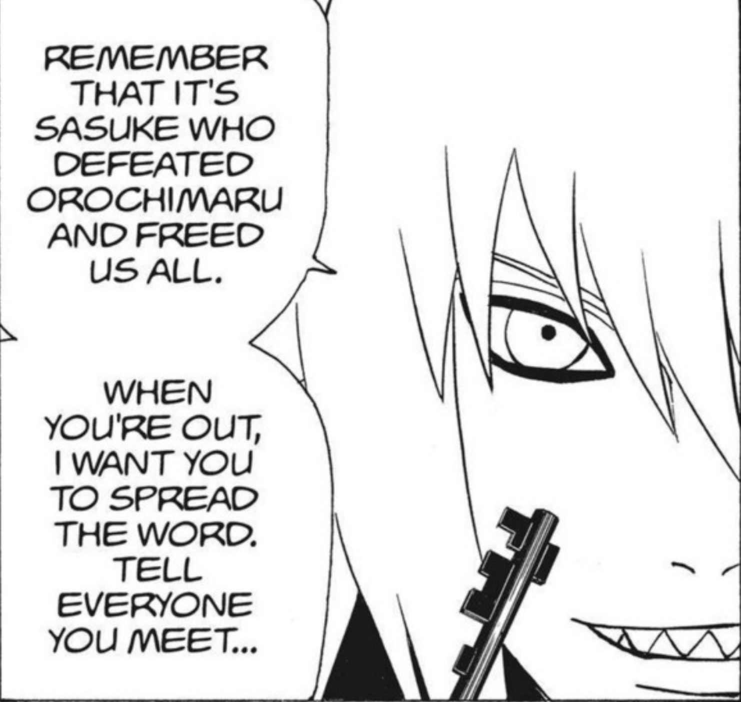

WHAT, YOU MEAN IT?


SURE. YOU DON'T SEE ME LOCKED UP, DO YOU?


READ THIS WAY

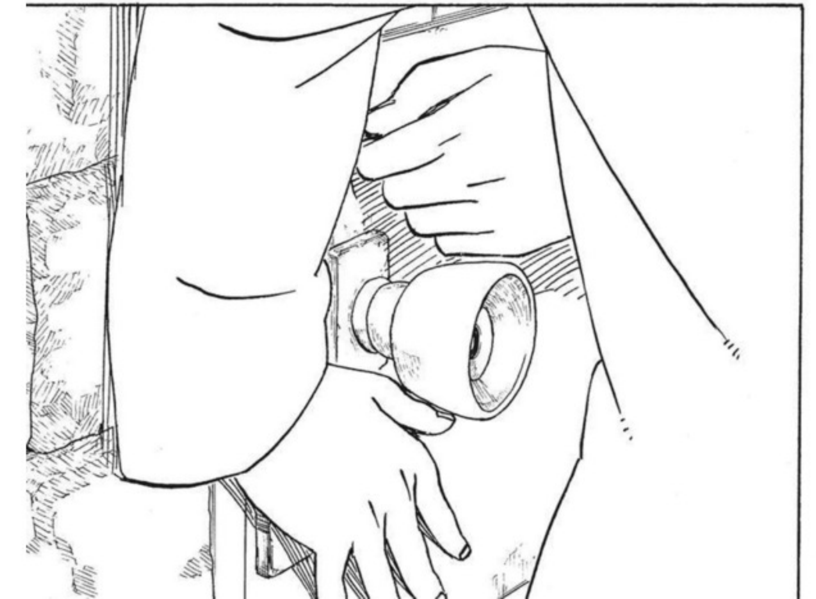

I'LL OPEN THE DOOR.
BUT BEFORE I DO, I HAVE ONE FAVOR TO ASK OF ALL OF YOU.


FINE BY ME!
WE'LL DO WHAT-EVER YOU WANT!


REMEMBER THAT IT'S SASUKE WHO DEFEATED OROCHIMARU AND FREED US ALL.
WHEN YOU'RE OUT, I WANT YOU TO SPREAD THE WORD. TELL EVERYONE YOU MEET...


"A MAN IS NOW AMONG US WHO WILL BRING STABILITY AND PEACE." YOU GOT THAT?
HEE HEE...
SHK


G-CHAK




?

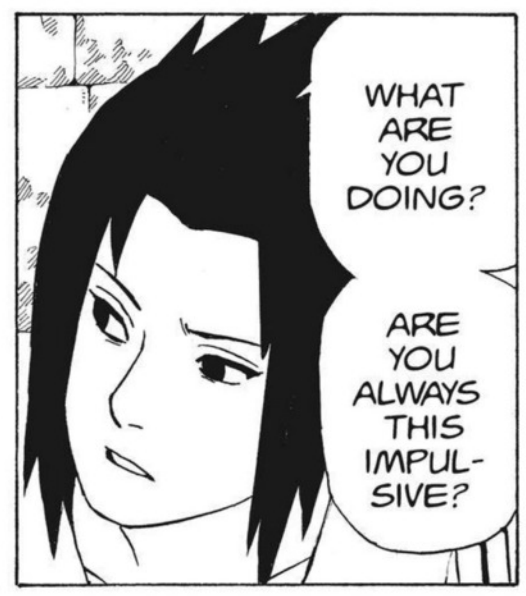

Okay, I'll come. ♡

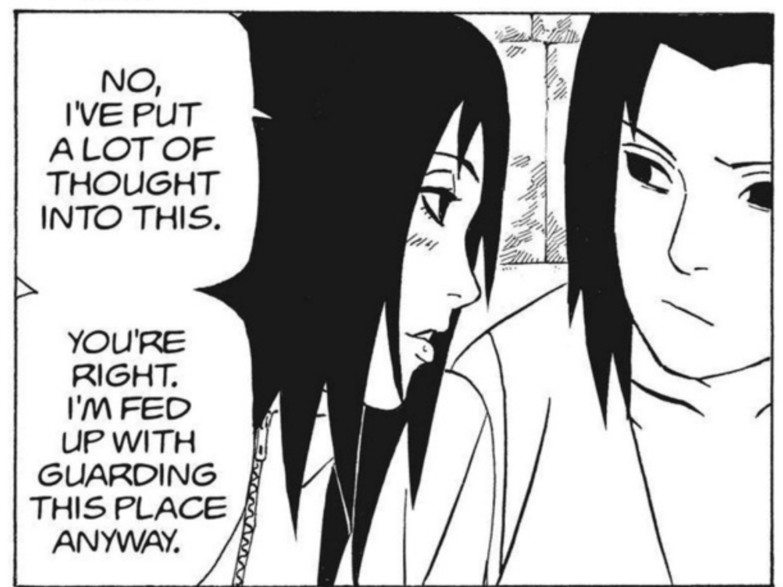

TIK

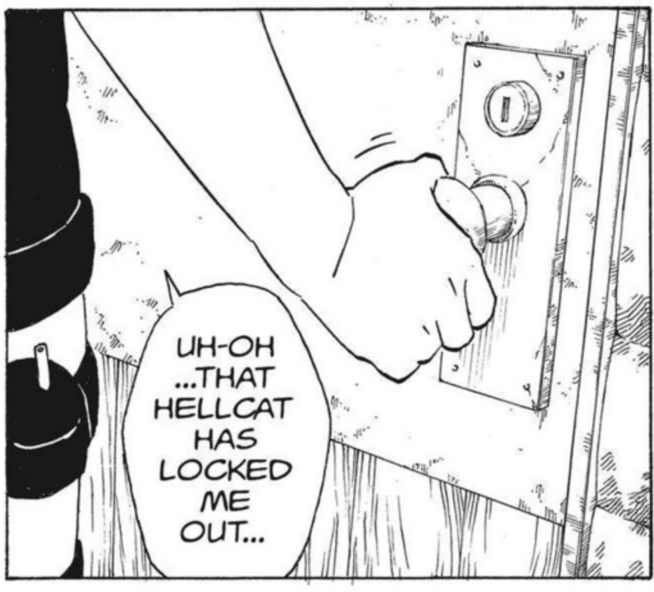

SST


IF YOU REALLY WANT ME TO, SASUKE...
I WILL FOLLOW YOU.
SST


READ THIS WAY


WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
ARE YOU ALWAYS THIS IMPUL-SIVE?


NO, I'VE PUT A LOT OF THOUGHT INTO THIS.
YOU'RE RIGHT. I'M FED UP WITH GUARDING THIS PLACE ANYWAY.

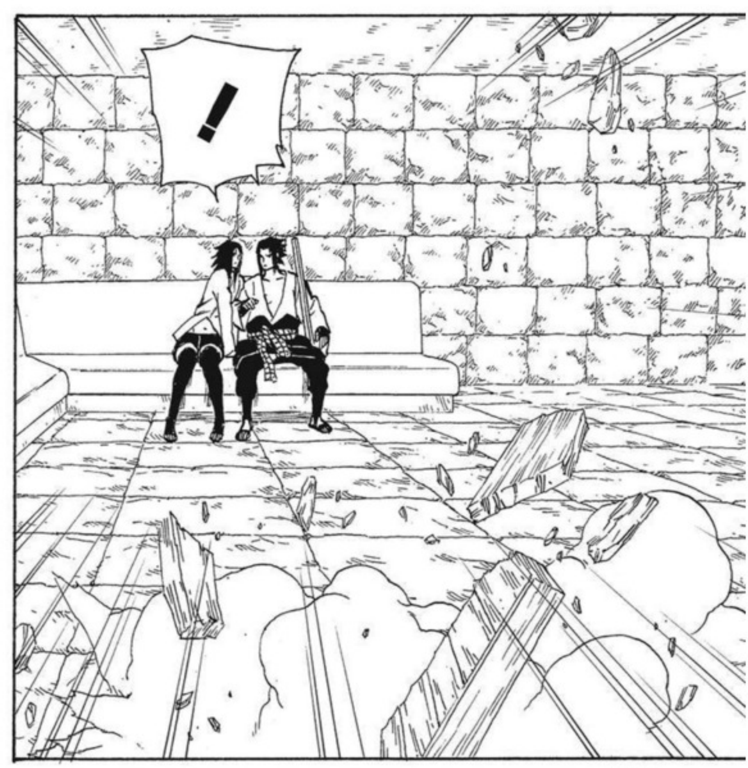

UH-OH ...THAT HELLCAT HAS LOCKED ME OUT...


HMPH...


HEY... GET BACK.
CREEP
Listen... Why don't we do this alone? Just the two of us?♡
Suigetsu won't do anything for you... not really.

SHRAAK

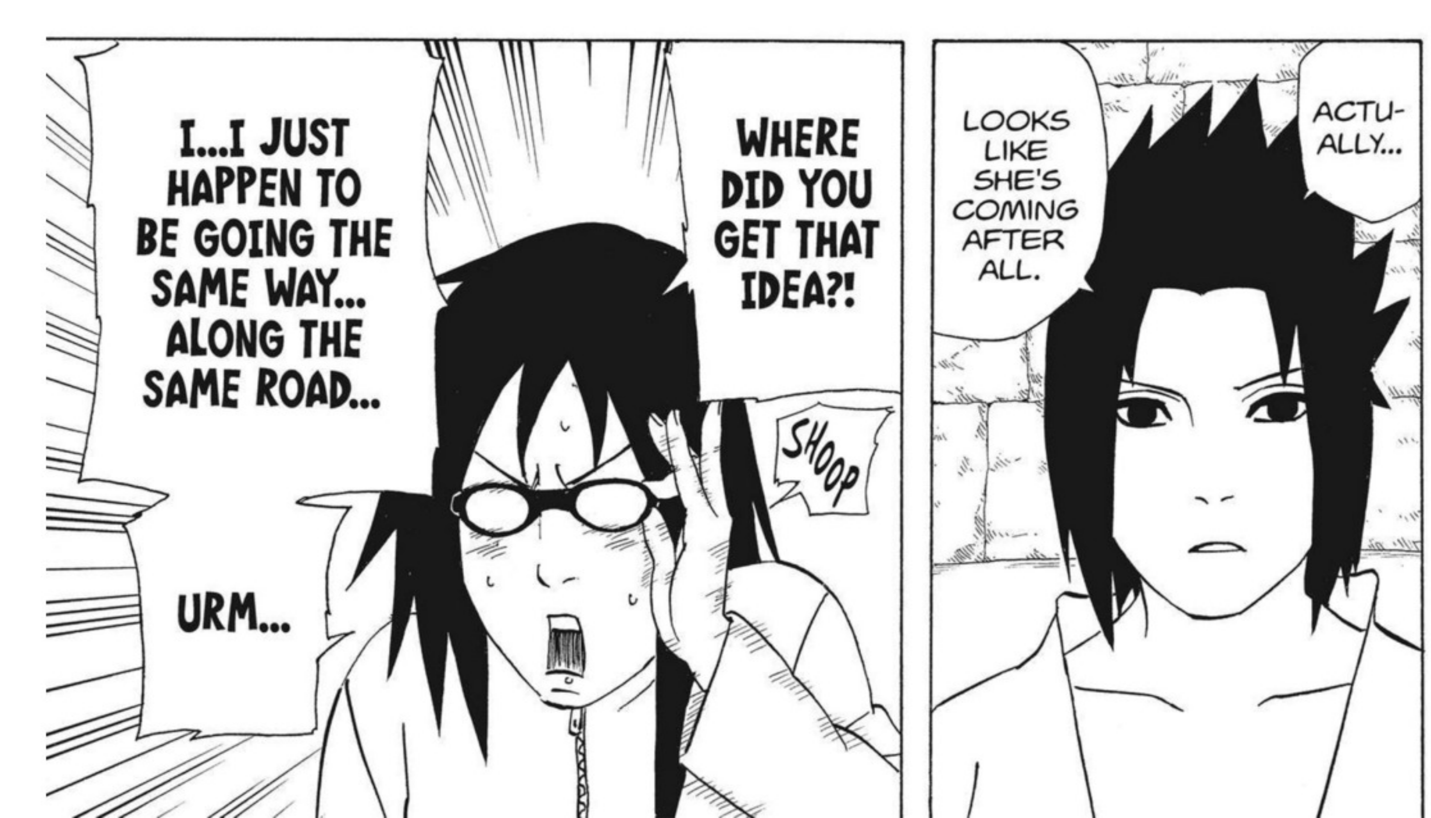


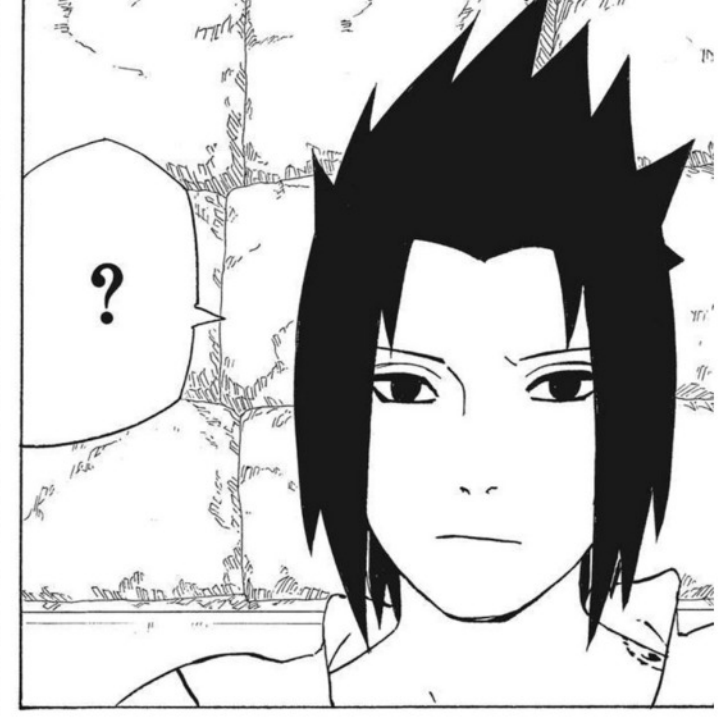




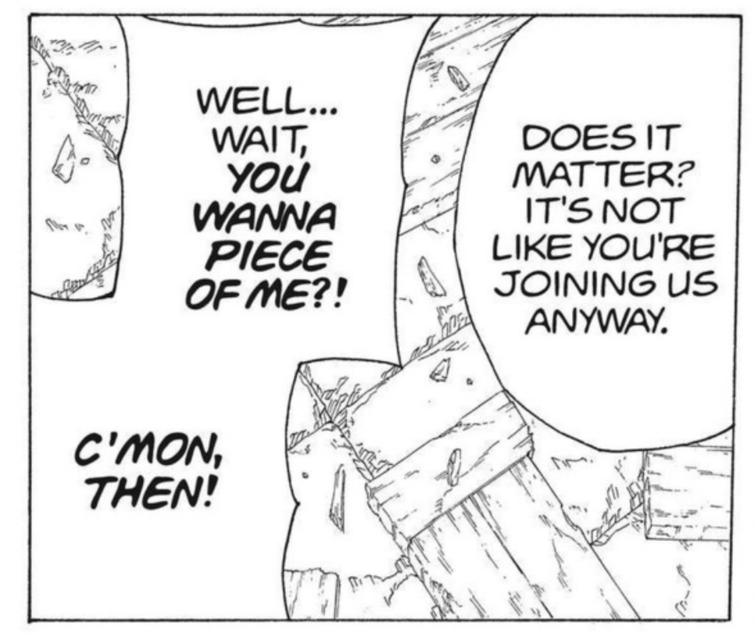
C'MON, SASUKE. LET'S GO.

I TAKE IT KARIN IS STAYING HERE?




OH YEAH? WELL, THAT WORKS OUT OKAY.
WE CAN GO HALFWAY, THEN.

?

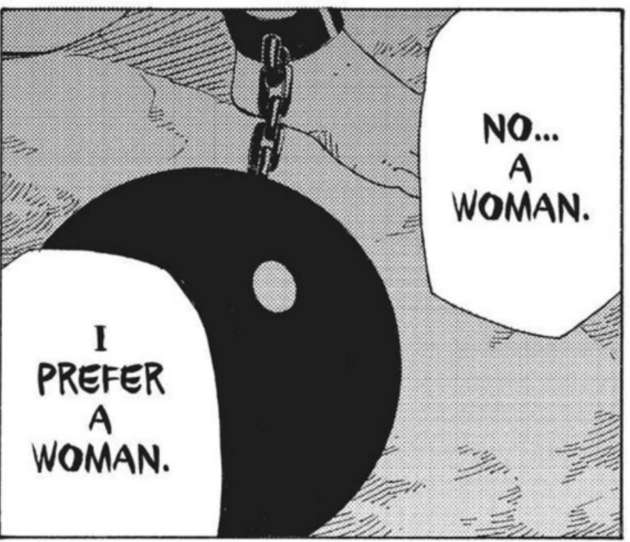
NOW... FOR JUGO.


SURE. FINE. HALF-WAY.
SHOVE

WELL... WAIT, **YOU WANNA PIECE OF ME?!**
DOES IT MATTER? IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE JOINING US ANYWAY.
C'MON, THEN!

YOU'RE NOT THROW-ING HIM IN?
WHAAAT? JUGO?!


READ THIS WAY

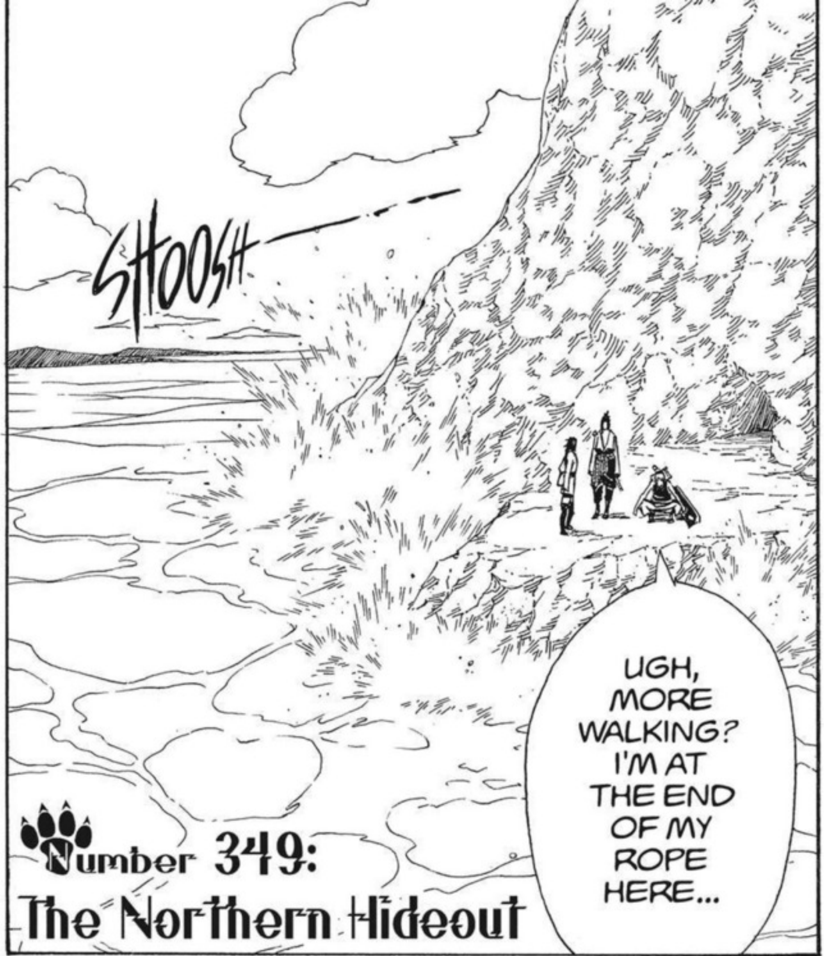

...


NO... A WOMAN.
I PREFER A WOMAN.

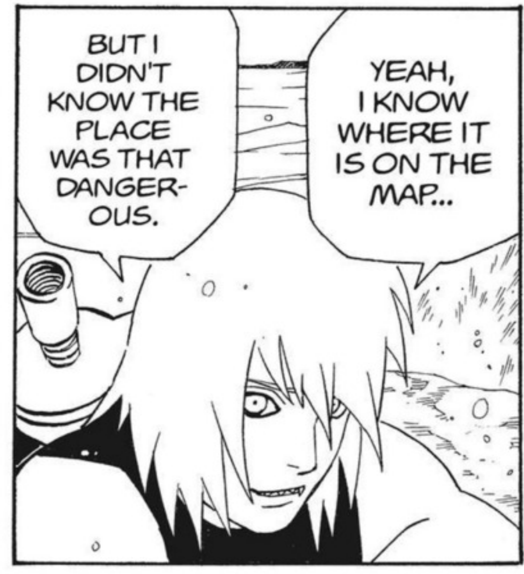

BUT WAIT... WHY NOT A MAN?
YEAH... YEAH, A MAN WILL DO.


NO... A WOMAN... GOTTA BE A WOMAN...
NAH... A MAN'S BETTER...


NARUTO


SHOOSH
Number 349:
The Northern Hideout
UGH, MORE WALKING? I'M AT THE END OF MY ROPE HERE...


GEEZ. YOU KNOW WE'RE GOING TO THE NORTHERN HIDEOUT.
IF YOU CAN'T EVEN TAKE A LITTLE WALK, YOU'RE DEAD THE MOMENT WE ARRIVE.


YEAH, I KNOW WHERE IT IS ON THE MAP...
BUT I DIDN'T KNOW THE PLACE WAS THAT DANGER-OUS.

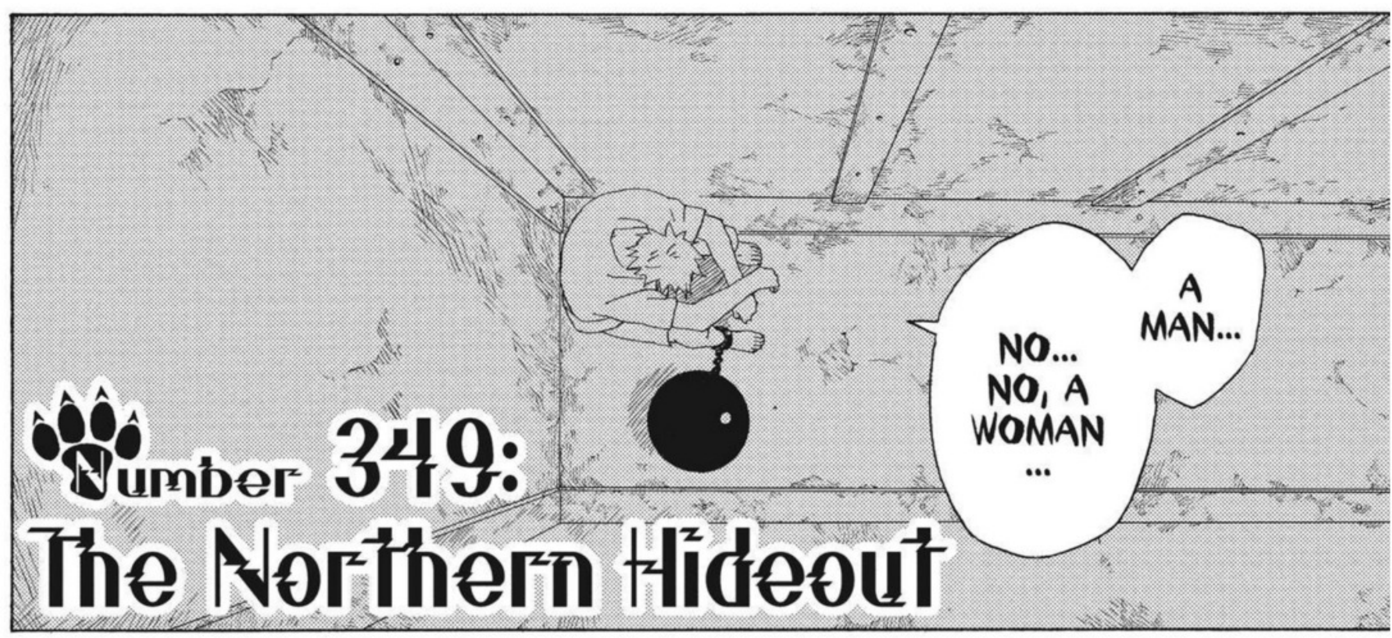

THE NORTHERN HIDEOUT ISN'T YOUR CONVENTIONAL STRONGHOLD.


?

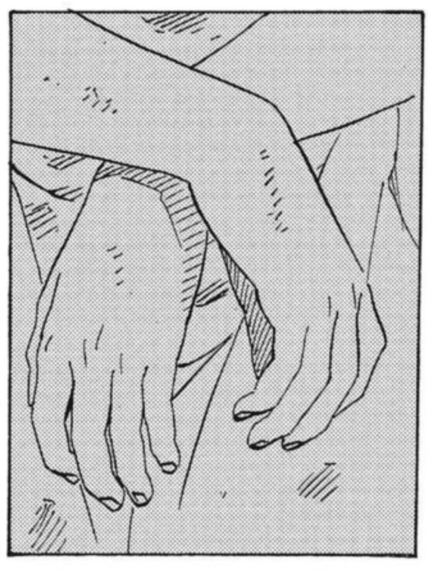

IT'S FOR ... WELL ...

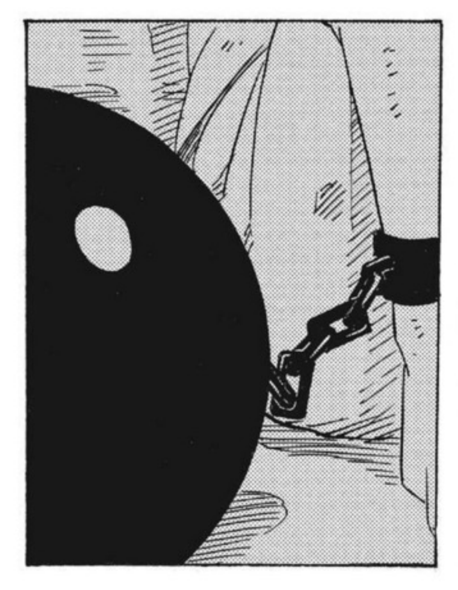
...HUMAN EXPERIMENTATION.

IT'S FULL OF ALL THE MONSTERS THEY PRODUCE THERE.





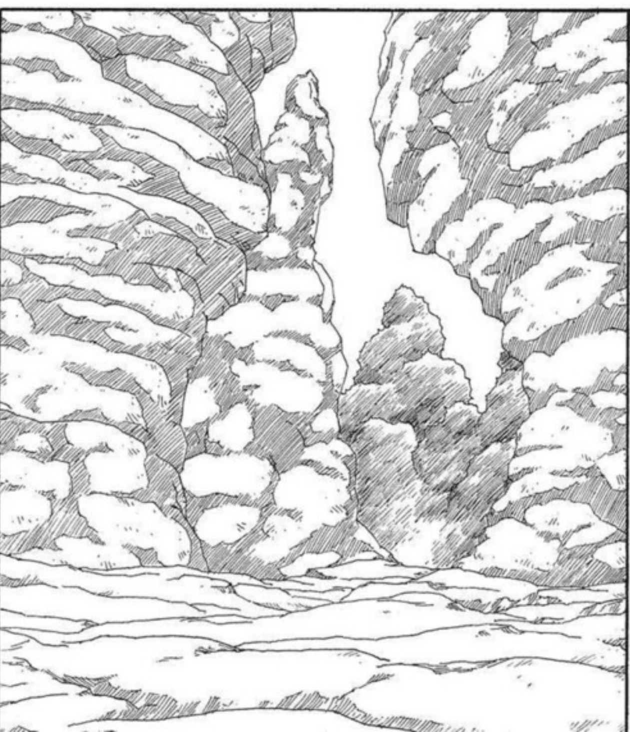





MY NEXT VICTIM...
...WILL BE A MAN... YEAH...

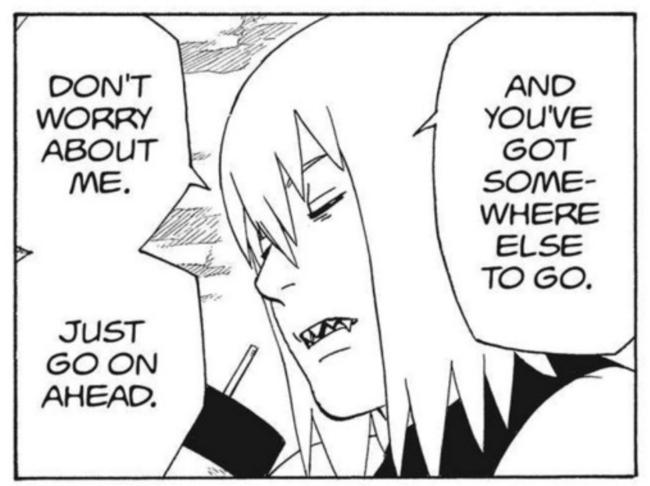

GAHHHH!!
WHAM
!


HMM... IT'S BEGUN...



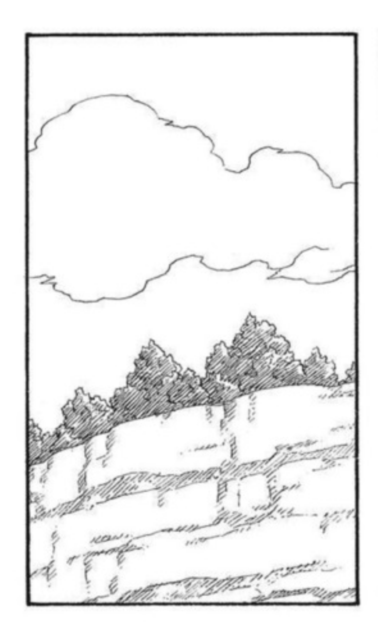

HEY... YOU GOTTA BE TIRED BY NOW.
TIME FOR A BREAK.
SLURP


HOW PATHETIC *ARE* YOU?!
THE NORTHERN HIDEOUT IS STILL A LONG WAY OFF!

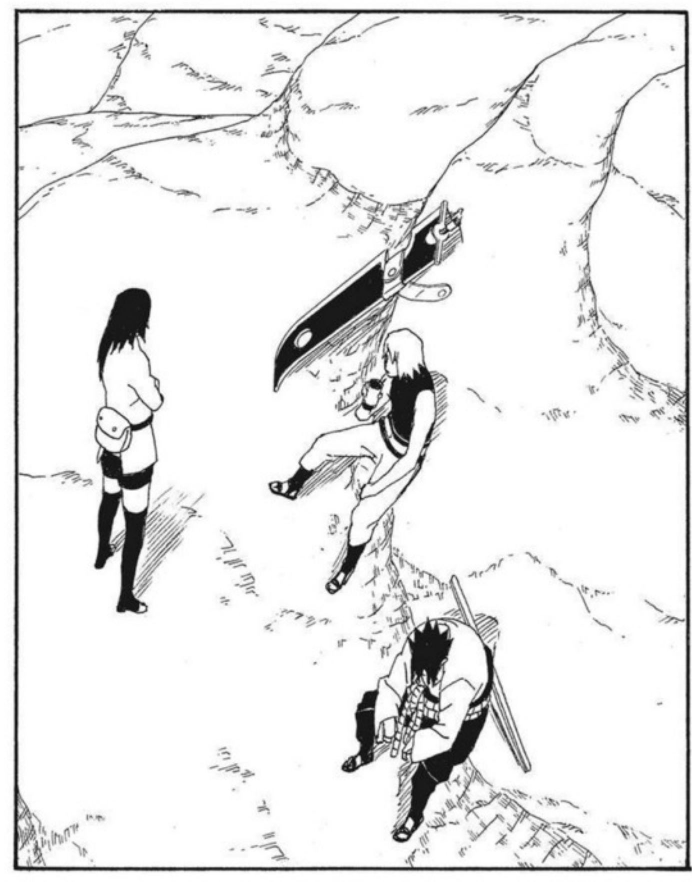

AND YOU'VE GOT SOME-WHERE ELSE TO GO.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
JUST GO ON AHEAD.


WELL, I JUST REMEMBERED SOMETHING I HAD TO DO AT THE NORTHERN HIDEOUT!
SO I DECIDED TO GO THERE FIRST!

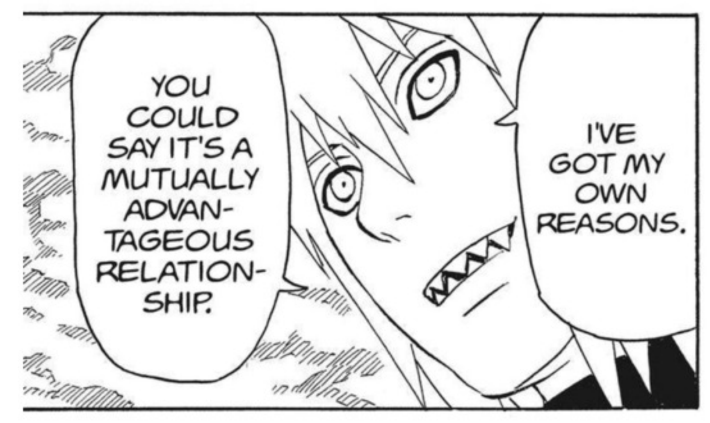

OH BOY...

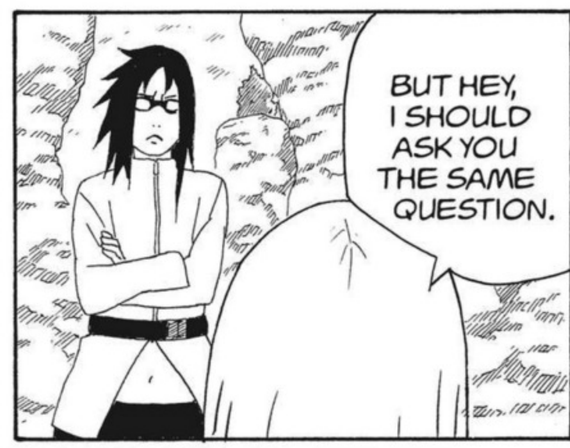


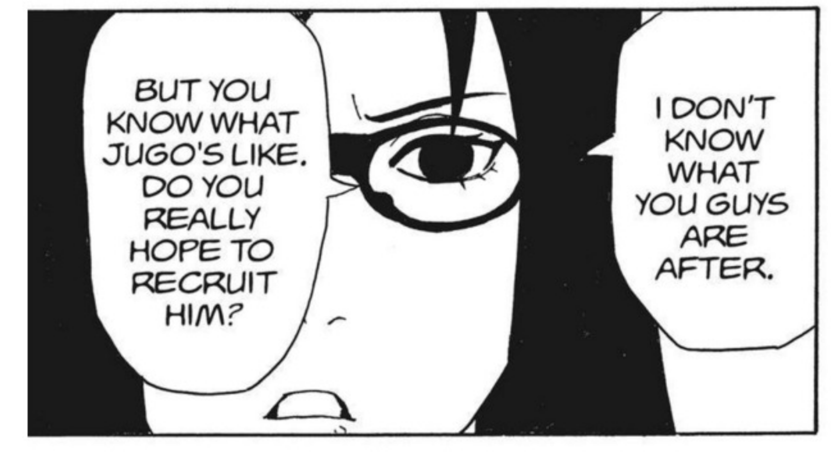

READ THIS WAY




...
SUIGETSU ...WHY ARE YOU HANGING AROUND WITH SASUKE?

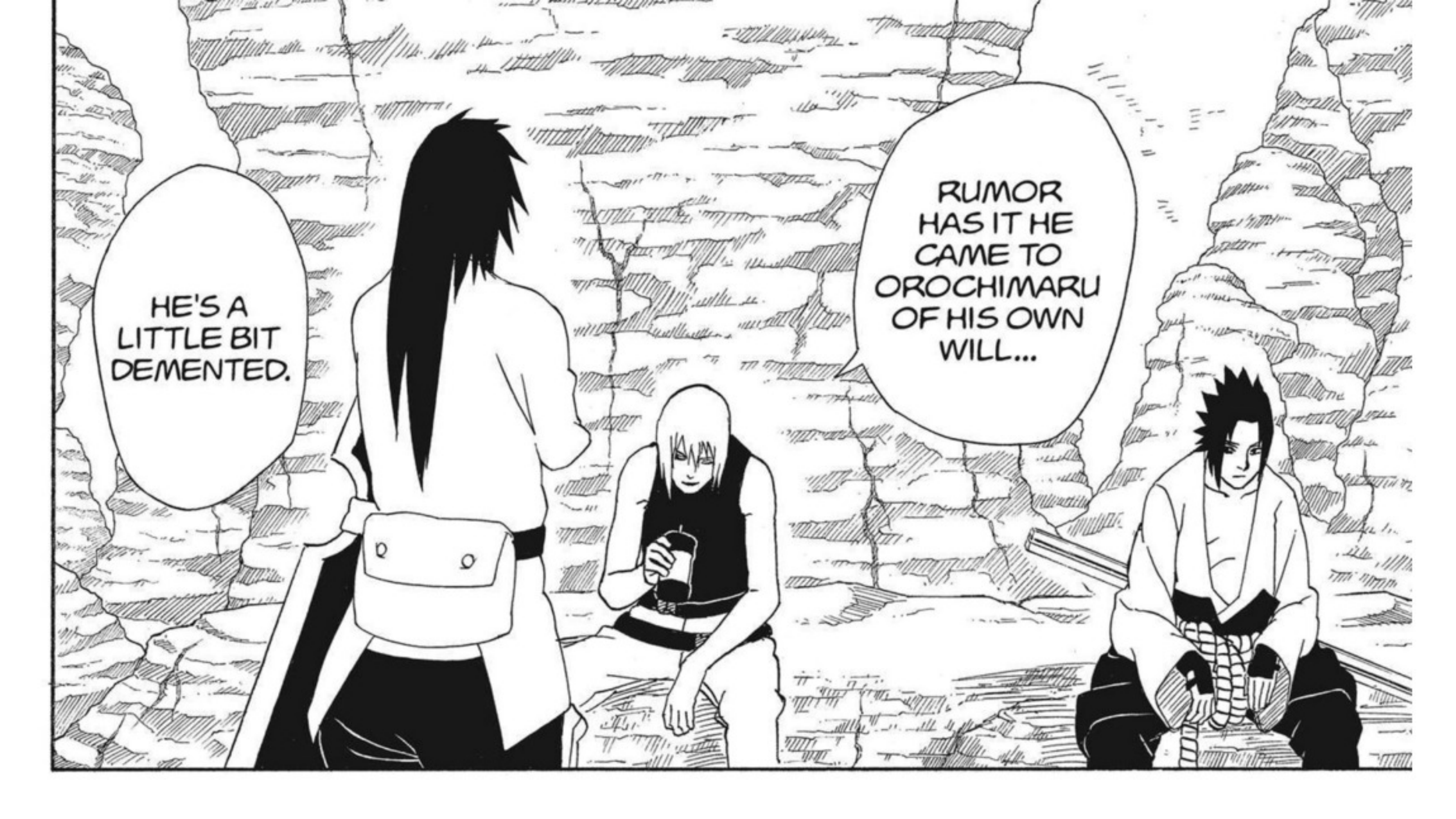

I'VE GOT MY OWN REASONS.
YOU COULD SAY IT'S A MUTUALLY ADVAN-TAGEOUS RELATION-SHIP.


BUT HEY, I SHOULD ASK YOU THE SAME QUESTION.

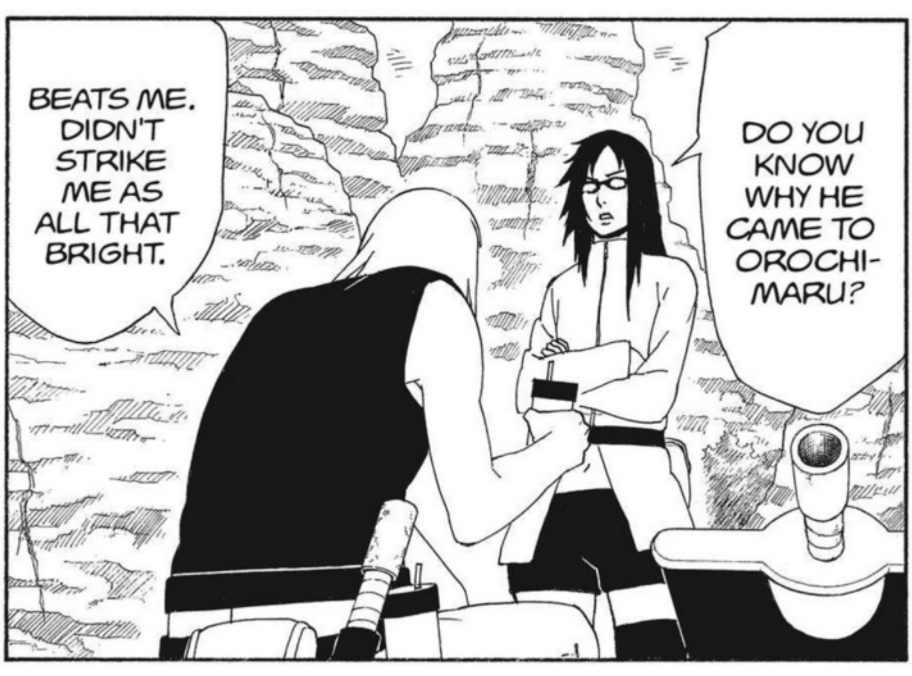

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU GUYS ARE AFTER.
BUT YOU KNOW WHAT JUGO'S LIKE. DO YOU REALLY HOPE TO RECRUIT HIM?

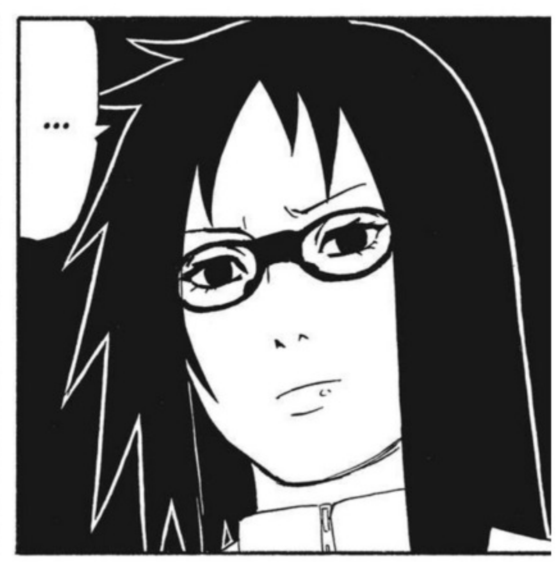

I KNOW A FEW THINGS ABOUT HIM.
I WAS FORCED TO FIGHT HIM ONCE.


HE USED SOME INTERESTING POWERS AND WAS PRETTY STRONG.
BUT I COULD NEVER TELL WHAT HE WAS THINKING, AND I NEVER LIKED HIM.

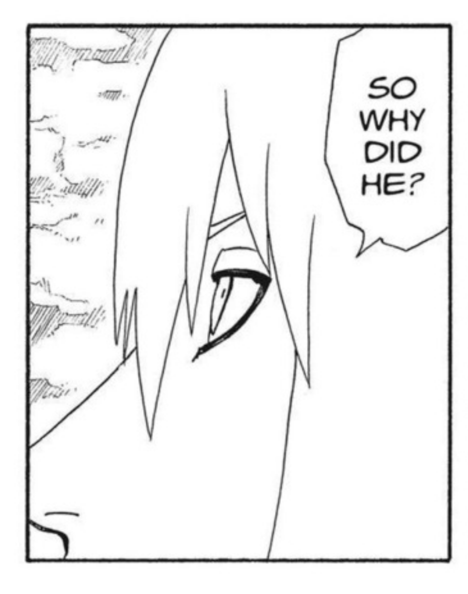

RUMOR HAS IT HE CAME TO OROCHIMARU OF HIS OWN WILL...
HE'S A LITTLE BIT DEMENTED.


...

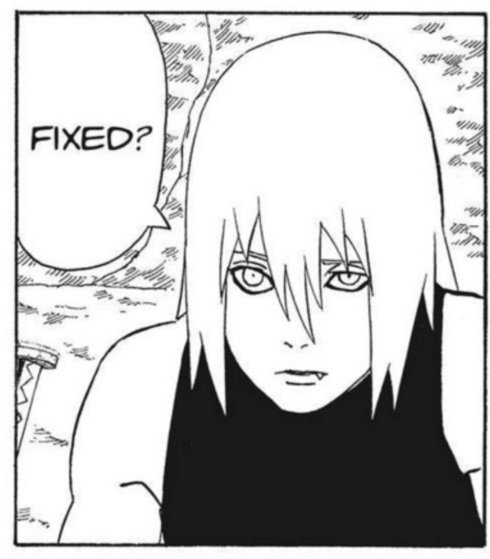

DO YOU KNOW WHY HE CAME TO OROCHI-MARU?
BEATS ME. DIDN'T STRIKE ME AS ALL THAT BRIGHT.

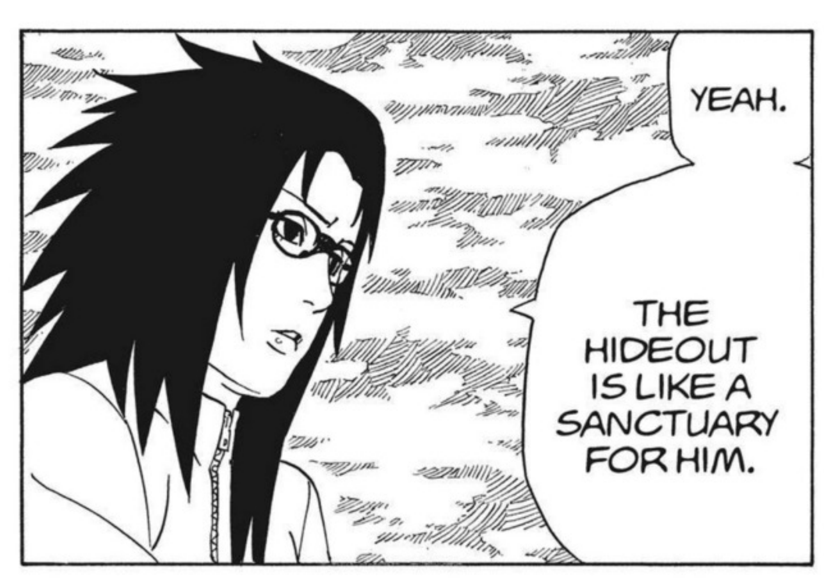

...

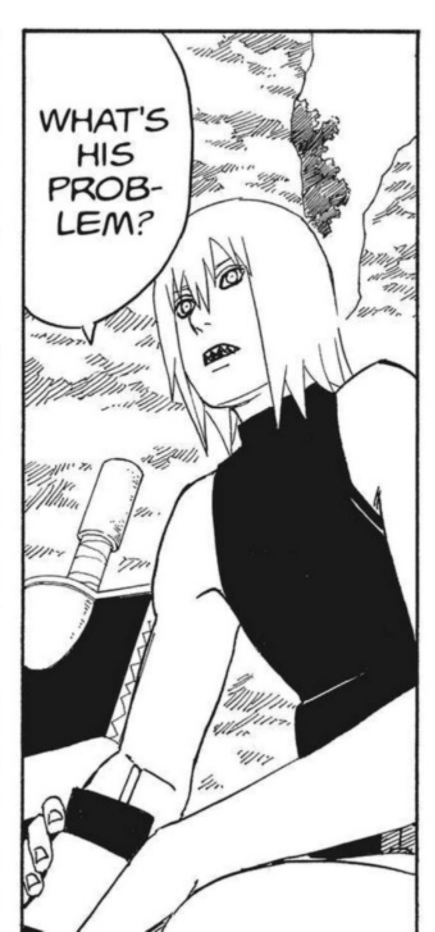

...?


SO WHY DID HE?


TO BE FIXED.


FIXED?

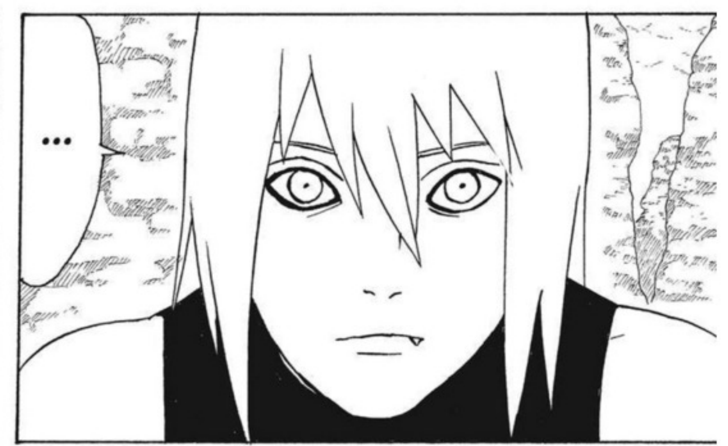

YEAH.
THE HIDEOUT IS LIKE A SANCTUARY FOR HIM.

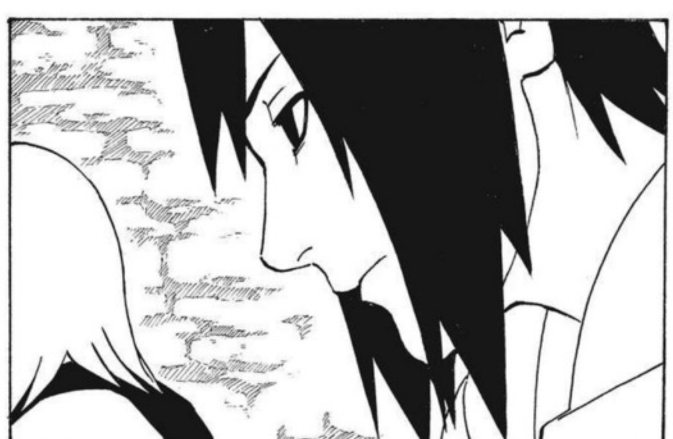

WHAT'S HIS PROB-LEM?


IT'S... LIKE AN ADDICTION. A COM-PULSION.
HE CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT ON HIS OWN.


?

HE WANTS TO CONTROL HIS URGE TO SLAUGHTER.

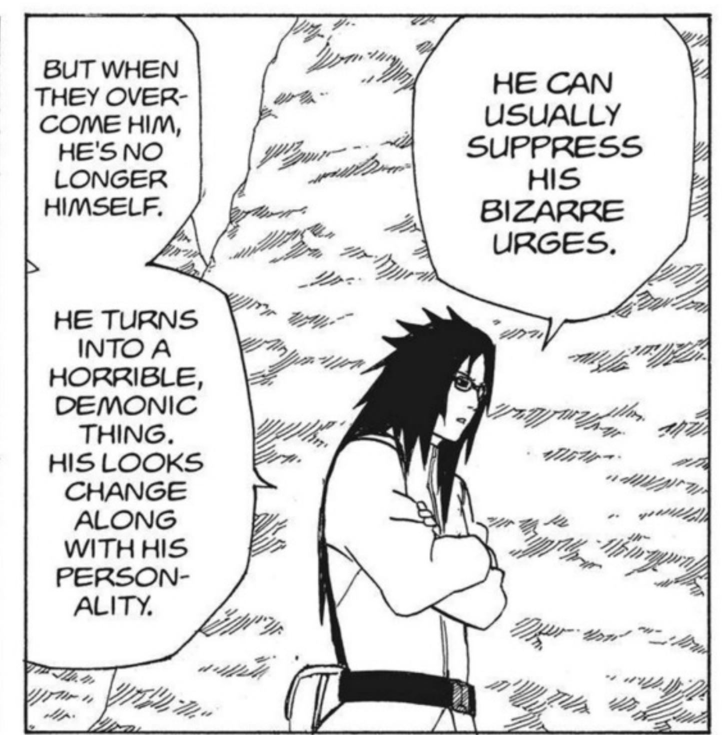


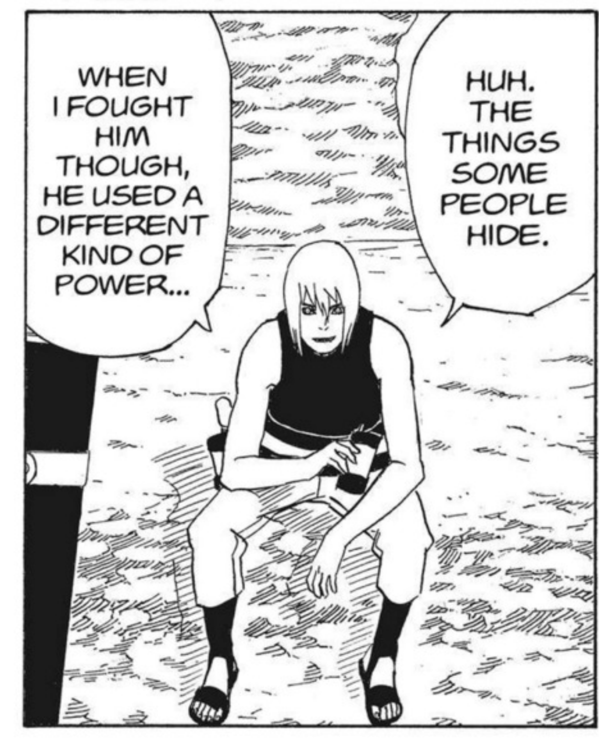







READ THIS WAY


HE CAN USUALLY SUPPRESS HIS BIZARRE URGES.
BUT WHEN THEY OVER-COME HIM, HE'S NO LONGER HIMSELF.
HE TURNS INTO A HORRIBLE, DEMONIC THING. HIS LOOKS CHANGE ALONG WITH HIS PERSON-ALITY.


HUH. THE THINGS SOME PEOPLE HIDE.
WHEN I FOUGHT HIM THOUGH, HE USED A DIFFERENT KIND OF POWER...

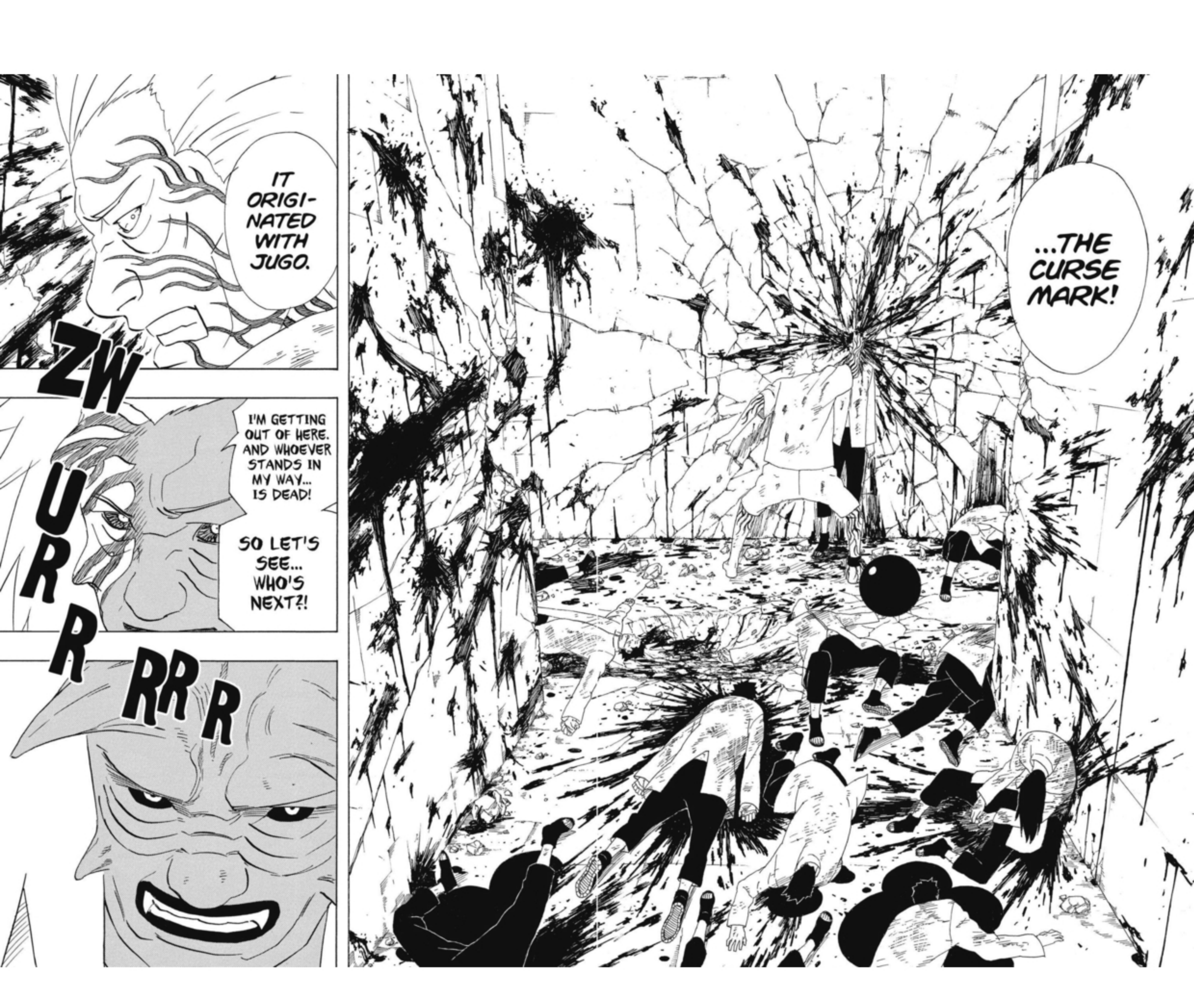

OROCHIMARU WAS FASCI-NATED WITH HIS POWER. THAT'S WHAT LED HIM TO EXTRACT A CERTAIN FLUID FROM JUGO'S BODY...
AND PURIFY THE ENZYME...
WHICH ALLOWED OTHER SHINOBI TO ACHIEVE THE SAME STATE.

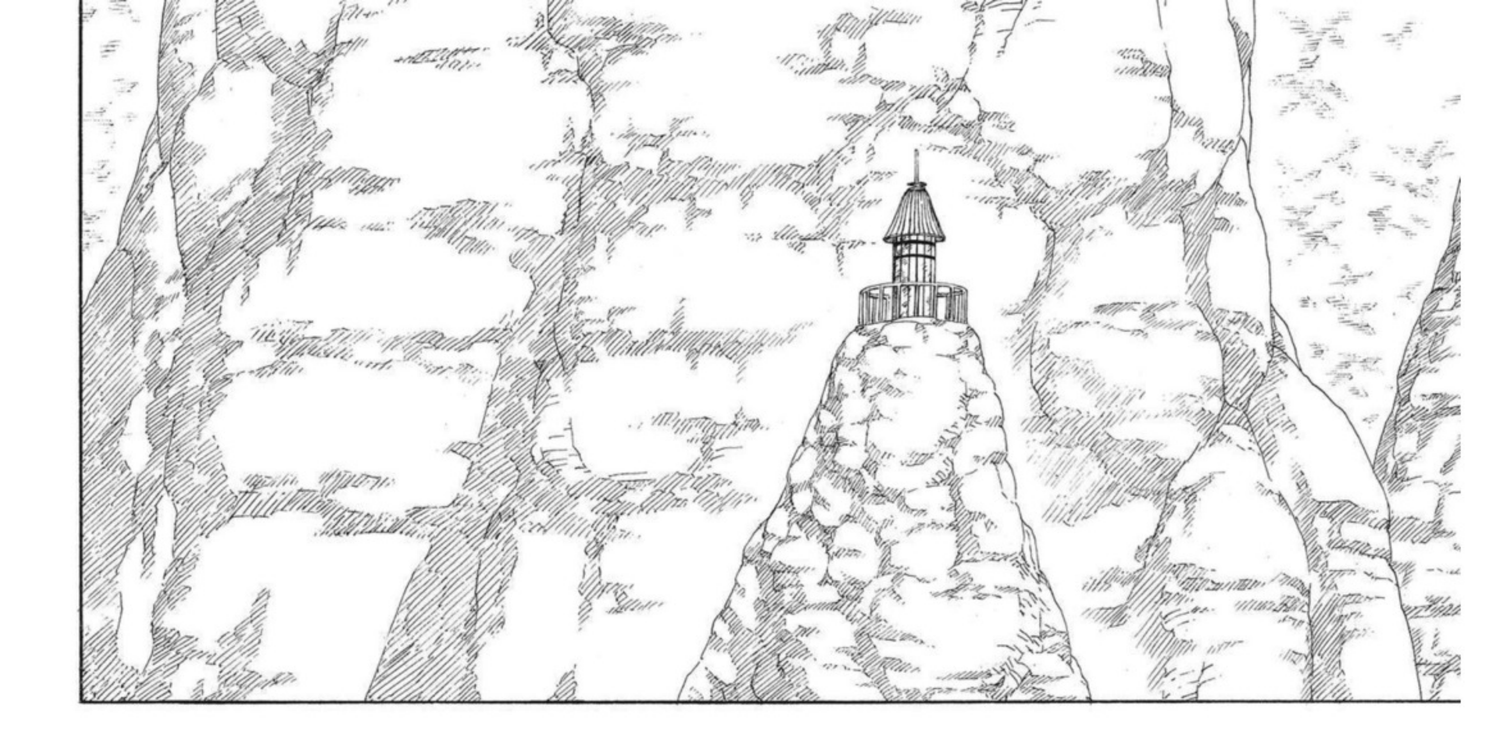

I'M SURE YOU KNOW WHERE I'M GOING HERE.

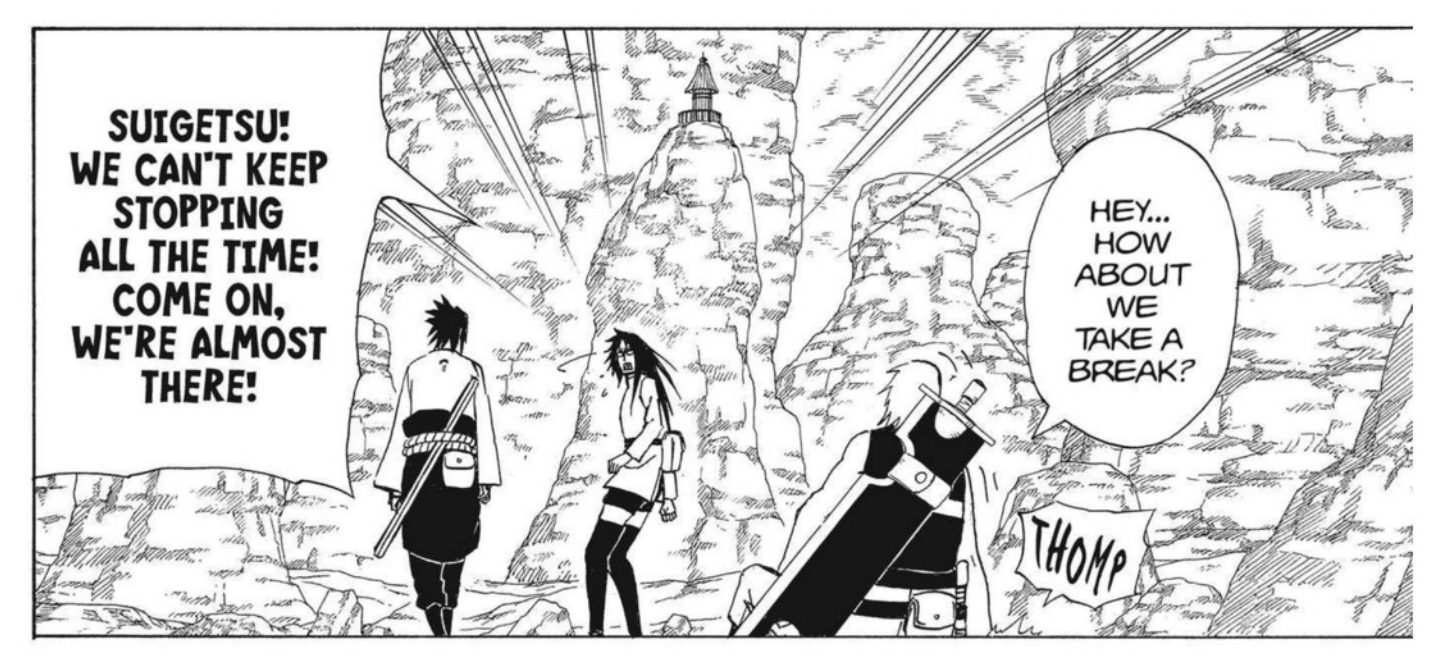

...?



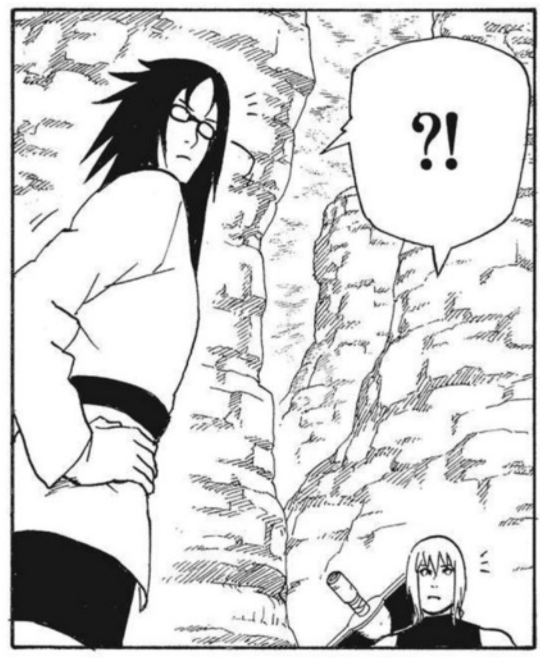

I'M TALK-ING ABOUT ...


...THE CURSE MARK!
IT ORIGINATED WITH JUGO.
ZWURRRRR
I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE. AND WHOEVER STANDS IN MY WAY... IS DEAD!
SO LET'S SEE... WHO'S NEXT?!

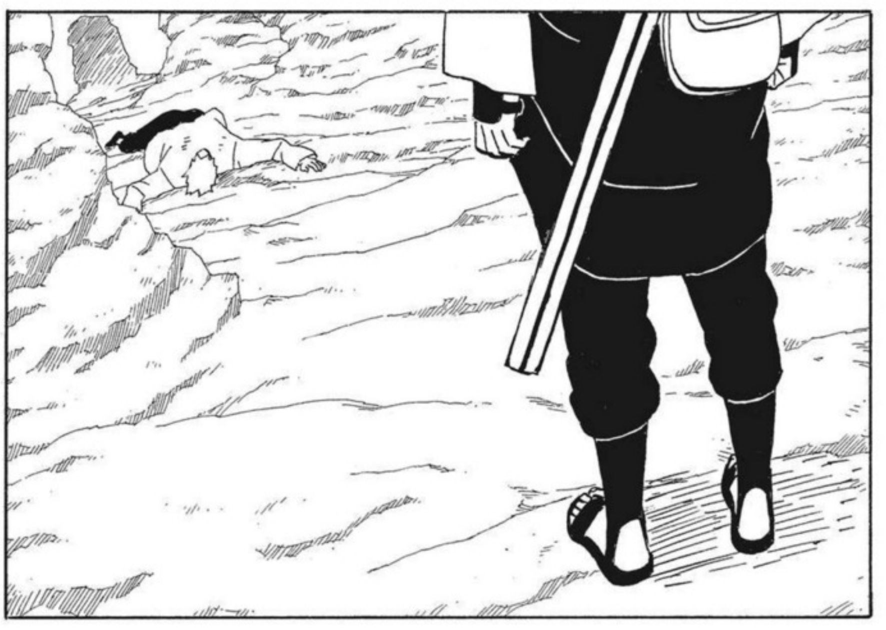


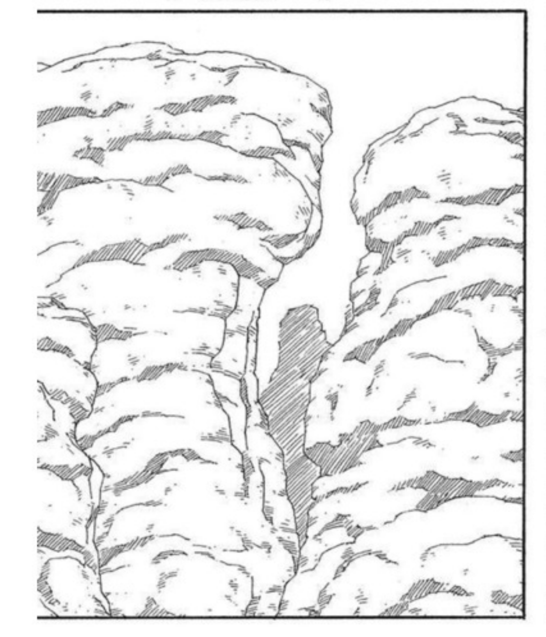

HEY... HOW ABOUT WE TAKE A BREAK?
THOMP
SUIGETSU! WE CAN'T KEEP STOPPING ALL THE TIME! COME ON, WE'RE ALMOST THERE!

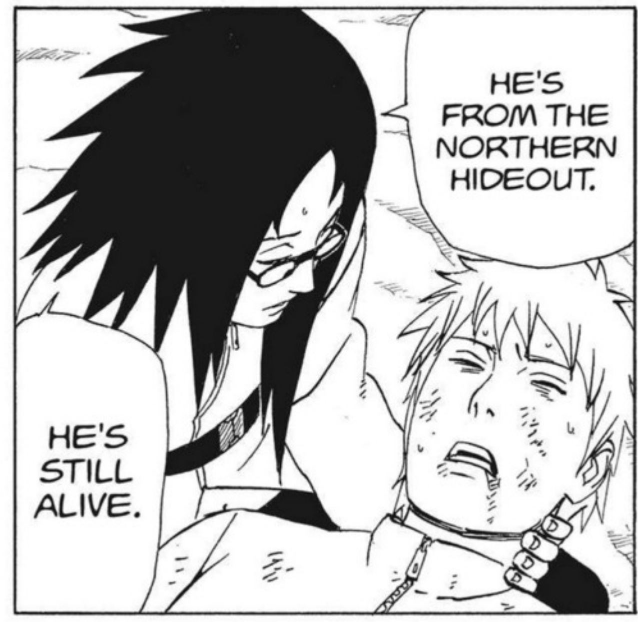

IS IT THAT SWORD? IS IT TOO HEAVY FOR YOU?!
WHY DON'T YOU JUST LEAVE IT BEHIND?!
HEY...

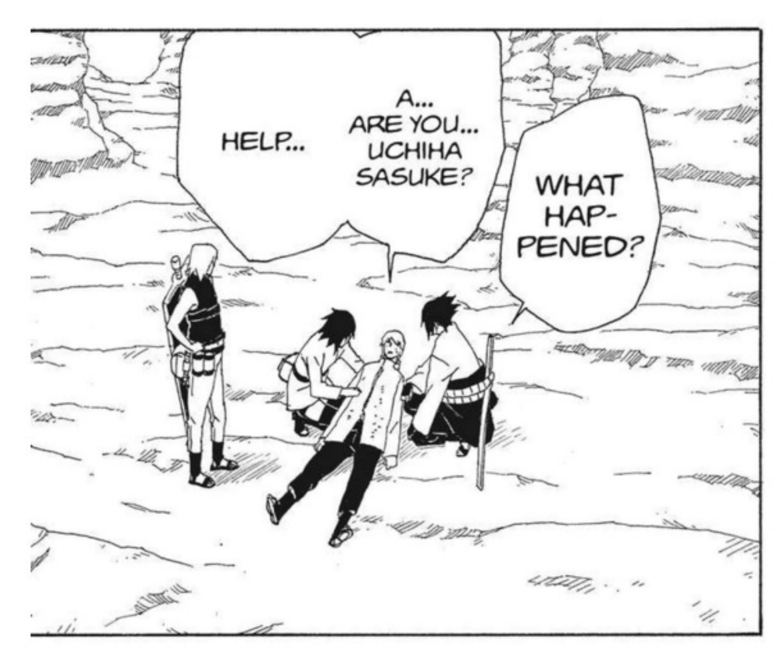

?!


READ THIS WAY






HE'S FROM THE NORTHERN HIDEOUT.
HE'S STILL ALIVE.


A... ARE YOU... UCHIHA SASUKE?
HELP...
WHAT HAP-PENED?

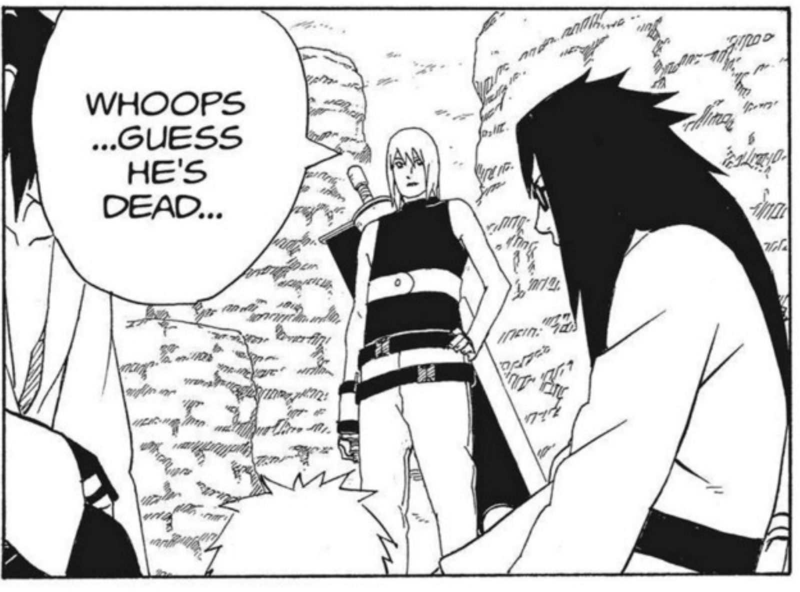

WHY, WHAT'S GOING ON?


IT STARTED WITH... A RUMOR THAT... OROCHI-MARU WAS DEAD.
THE PRISONERS... THEY ALL WENT BERSERK...


THE WAY IT'S GOING...


AGH...


SLUMP

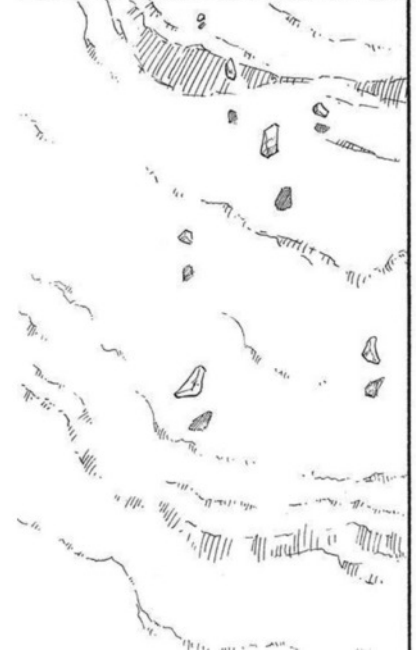

WHOOPS ...GUESS HE'S DEAD...


!

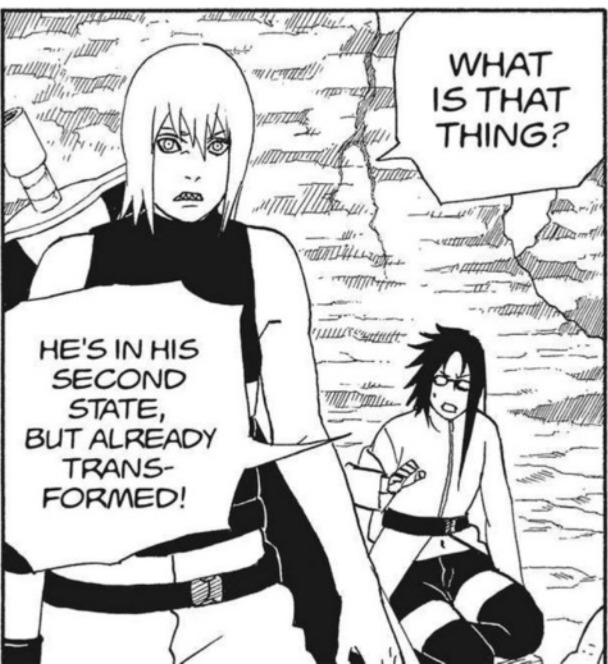

FWOO

KO
OM

I KNOW YOU...





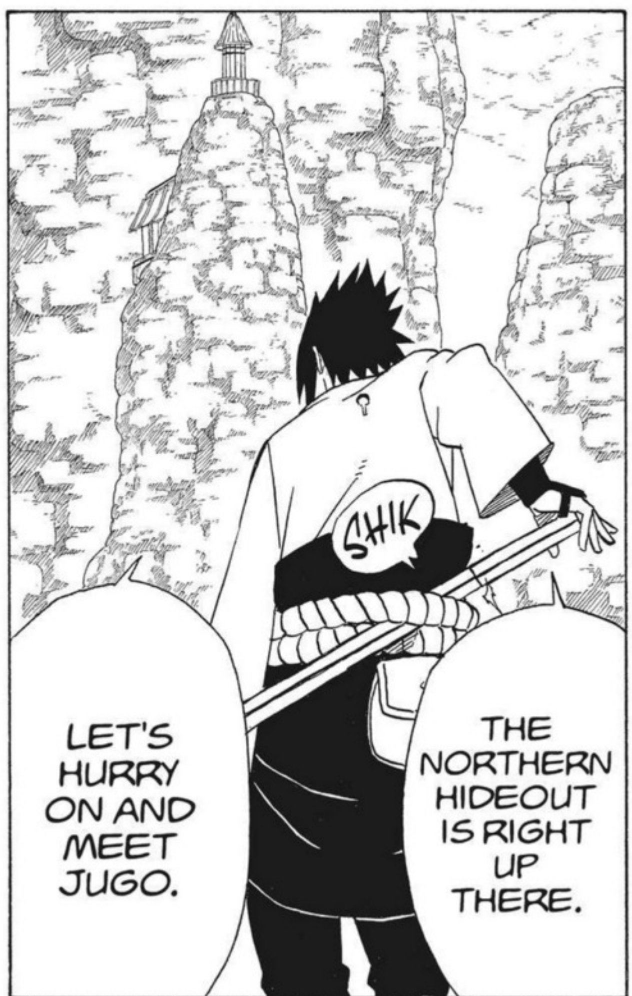


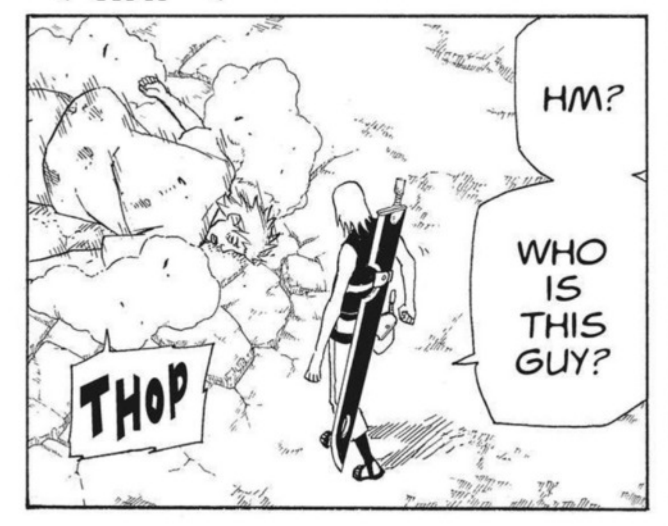
SHING

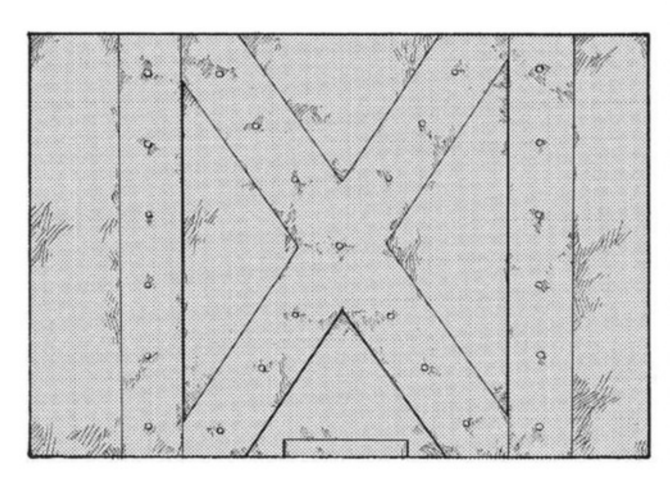

ZWURR R

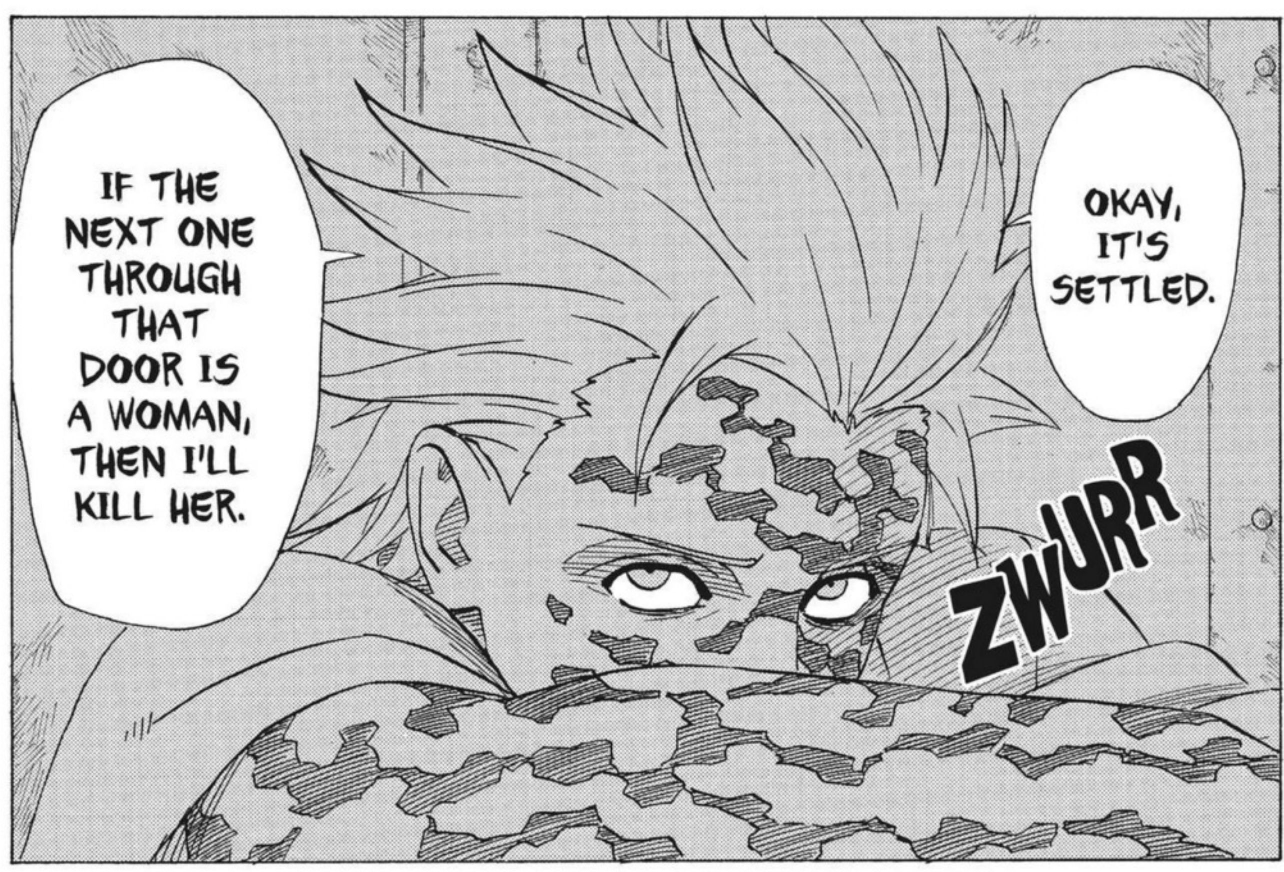












TO BE CONTINUED IN *NARUTO* VOLUME 39!